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Essay

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Alamat Redaksi:
Jl. KH. Ramli Selatan No. 20A Menteng Dalam, Tebet Jakarta
Telp : (+62) 218298855
Fax : (+62) 218354925
E-mail : tashwirulafkar9@gmail.com
Web : tashwirulafkar.net
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Urban Sufism in West Java: Reclaiming Spiritual Identity through Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Practices in the Digital Era

Abdul Wasik
Lembaga Ta'lif wan Nasyr Nahdlatul Ulama Jawa Barat
abdulwasik@uinsgd.ac.id

Cucu Setiawan
Lembaga Kemaslahatan Keluarga Nahdlatul Ulama Jawa Barat
cucusetiawan@uinsgd.ac.id

Mohamad Dindin Hamam Sidik
Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, Negara Brunei Darussalam
23MR1704@unissa.bn

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis keterlibatan pemuda Muslim urban dalam praktik Tarekat Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya sebagai respons spiritual terhadap krisis identitas, dislokasi budaya, dan tekanan kehidupan digital kontemporer. Fokus utama diarahkan pada eksplorasi kontribusi praktik kolektif sufistik-seperti dzikir, suluk, dan pengajian kitab klasik-terhadap pemulihan spiritual dan rekonstruksi identitas religius di wilayah urban Jawa Barat. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis tematik atas pengalaman empirik para anggota komunitas tarekat. Tiga temuan utama diidentifikasi: (1) spiritualitas tradisional berkontribusi dalam memperkuat ketahanan psikologis dan memperdalam pencarian makna hidup; (2) tarekat berfungsi sebagai ruang sosial yang inklusif dan suportif secara emosional, yang memperkuat identitas kolektif lintas kelas sosial; dan (3) praktik sufistik menunjukkan peran sebagai perlawanan simbolik terhadap purifikasi ideologis melalui pendekatan reflektif, afektif, dan berbasis nilai lokal. Hasil penelitian ini mengindikasikan bahwa komunitas tarekat memiliki potensi sebagai agen kultural dan spiritual dalam pembentukan habitus keberagamaan moderat generasi muda. Keaslian penelitian terletak pada integrasi aspek tradisi, teknologi, dan transendensi dalam menjelaskan dinamika religiositas pemuda Muslim di era pascamodern, serta pada kontribusinya dalam menawarkan kerangka konseptual baru dalam kajian sufisme urban dan formasi identitas religius.

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Kata kunci: Sufisme Urban; Religiositas Pemuda; Rekonstruksi Identitas; Spiritualitas Digital; Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya.

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the engagement of urban Muslim youth in the practices of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order as a spiritual response to identity crises, cultural dislocation, and the pressures of contemporary digital life. The primary focus is directed towards exploring the contribution of collective Sufi practices-such as dhikr, suluk (spiritual retreat), and classical Islamic text study-to spiritual restoration and the reconstruction of religious identity in urban areas of West Java. A qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and thematic analysis of the empirical experiences of Sufi community members. Three key findings were identified: (1) traditional spirituality contributes to strengthening psychological resilience and deepening the search for existential meaning; (2) the Sufi order functions as an inclusive and emotionally supportive social space that reinforces collective identity across social classes; and (3) Sufi practices demonstrate a symbolic resistance to ideological purification through reflective, affective, and locally grounded approaches. The findings indicate that Sufi communities possess the potential to act as cultural and spiritual agents in shaping a moderate religious habitus among youth. The originality of this research lies in its integration of tradition, technology, and transcendence in explaining the dynamics of Muslim youth religiosity in the postmodern era, as well as its contribution to offering a new conceptual framework in the study of urban Sufism and the formation of religious identity.

Keywords*: Urban Sufism; Youth Religiosity; Identity Reconstruction; Digital Spirituality; Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya.*

Introduction

In the contemporary dynamics of Indonesian Muslim society, particularly among urban youth, a notable resurgence of spirituality rooted in Sufi Islamic traditions has emerged. Amid the dominance of digital culture and the hegemony of fast-paced modern values, many young people are seeking alternative forms of spirituality that are deeper, more structured, and meaningful. This is evident in the growing engagement of younger generations with Sufi orders such as the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya, both in pesantren environments and urban communities. Practices such as communal dhikr, riyadhah, and suluk are increasingly becoming spaces for contemplation as well as social means for young people to rediscover the meaning of life, inner wholeness, and a religious identity that they perceive to be fragmented.

This phenomenon can also be interpreted as a response to rising existential anxiety, psychological pressure, and crises of religious identity, all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Global and regional studies have indicated that spirituality has functioned as a significant coping mechanism for adolescent mental health during the pandemic (Hastuti and Septariana 2025; Lakshmi, Oinam, and Gazalaxmi Devi 2023; Rias et al. 2020). Young individuals who were previously religiously inactive have begun to show new involvement in spiritual practices as part of their efforts towards healing and meaning-making. Research has also demonstrated a positive correlation between spirituality, mental well-being, and character development (Ahmed 2009; Musa 2015).

The emergence of this phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of digital culture. On one hand, social media has become a new arena for negotiating religious identity (Nisa 2022; Zaid et al. 2022); on the other, it has fostered the fragmentation of meaning and spiritual disorientation. Sufi orders offer an authentic, community-based religious experience that is grounded in transcendent depth-one that resists reduction by algorithms or digital consumption. Urban Sufism, as observed in Yogyakarta, has even manifested as a form of resistance to rigid religious formalism and Salafist purification, which are often perceived as spiritually dry (Sodik and Sujibto 2023).

The engagement of youth in Sufi orders-particularly the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya-may thus be interpreted as a form of reclaiming spirituality: a conscious effort among young people to reconstruct their religious identity through collective experience, spiritual discipline, and rootedness in the Nusantara Islamic tradition. This marks the emergence of a new trend in contemporary Islamic studies: the revitalisation of traditional spirituality by the digital generation.

Research on youth religiosity and spiritual involvement has developed significantly, especially in response to the challenges of the digital era and identity transformation. Previous literature may be categorised into three main approaches. First, digital religious expression and identity formation have become central themes. Scholars such as Zaid et al. (2022), Husein & Slama (2018), and Lengauer (2018) highlight how Muslim youth utilise social media to display personal piety-through online tilawah, digital pengajian, and Islamic content on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. This phenomenon, known as “digital piety,” constructs a space for religious expression that is not always reliant on clerical authority or conventional places of worship (Valibeigi 2018; Zaid et al. 2022). However, this approach tends to be individualistic and rarely addresses the communal dynamics of

spirituality found in Sufi orders (Rosowsky 2019; Salam-Salmaoui, Hassan, and Salam 2025).

Second, studies on urban Sufism and youth participation in Sufi orders suggest a transformation in spiritual culture. Research by Howell (2008), Sodik & Sujibto (2023), and Yusdani et al. (2019) reveals a shift in Sufi practices from pesantren-based to urban public spaces such as cafés, youth communities, and online platforms. Zamhari (2013) and Sharify-Funk et al. (2017) discuss how Sufi orders have innovated by building networks of popular culture-based da'wah. Rahmatullah et al. (2024) even demonstrate how some young Sufis express their spirituality through political activism, blending political piety with Islamic spiritual values. However, these studies often remain descriptive or sociological, without exploring how communal spiritual experiences contribute to stable religious identity formation amidst existential crises and digital pressures.

Third, literature linking spiritual practice to psychological resilience and mental well-being is fairly extensive. Studies by Musa (2015), Ahmed (2009), and Dwidiyanti et al. (2022) indicate that practices such as dhikr, prayer, and Islamic meditation positively impact stress reduction and religious personality formation. Krok et al. (2023) and Magan et al. (2024) further suggest that participation in collective rituals enhances resilience, especially among vulnerable groups like adolescents or refugees. Sufi practices such as suluk and riyadhah have also been shown to have therapeutic effects (Bakri, Wahyudi, and Andriyani 2025; Jais et al. 2024). However, these studies tend to treat religious experience as a personal process and have not explored the potential of Sufi communities as collective meaning-making agents that provide connectedness, emotional stability, and intergenerational spiritual support.

This study seeks to explore in depth how the involvement of urban Muslim youth in the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya order in West Java contributes to the reconstruction of religious identity and spiritual recovery in the context of digital cultural pressure and contemporary existential crisis. Specifically, the study aims to address a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between collective Sufi spirituality and the formation of youth religious identity in the postmodern context. Building on the limitations of previous research that tends to focus on individual religiosity through digital media (digital piety) and rarely touches on communal spirituality (Rosowsky 2019; Zaid et al. 2022), this study examines how collective dhikr, riyadhah, and suluk practices serve as social-transcendental spaces that mediate the search for meaning, emotional stability, and a sense of connectedness among Muslim youth. Furthermore, the study explores how such communities function as arenas for forming a moderate, adaptive, and contextual religious

habitus, one that resists ideological purification and exclusivism while providing emotional and spiritual support for young people navigating the psycho-social challenges of the digital age.

The study is grounded in the argument that youth engagement in Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya practices in West Java constitutes a process of meaning-making and religious identity formation in the face of spiritual crisis and cultural pressure. Practices such as communal dhikr, suluk, and riyadhah serve not only as religious rituals but also as channels for spiritual and social restoration, fostering connectedness, traditional continuity, and emotional equilibrium amid the growing individualism and fragmentation of digital religiosity. Conceptually, engagement in Sufi communities offers a transformative space for young people to reconstruct their religious habitus through embodied, emotional, and intergenerational spiritual experience. In this context, the Sufi order not only functions as a preserver of Islamic tradition but also as a cultural field adaptive to social change. Thus, this study positions Sufi practice as a creative youth response to identity dislocation in the digital era, and as a revitalisation of moderate, inclusive, and contextual Nusantara Islamic spirituality.

Results and Discussion

1. Revitalisation of Traditional Spirituality among Youth

Fieldwork findings indicate that the involvement of young people in the practices of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order in urban areas of West Java reflects a form of spiritual resistance to the fast-paced, instant, and individualistic nature of digital culture. Youth from diverse social backgrounds-students, young professionals, and former delinquents-actively participate in regular spiritual practices such as Lazimah, Wazhifah, and Hailalah under the guidance of a murshid. Activities such as tawajjuhan, suluk, and the study of Sufi texts serve as collective media to develop religious awareness, restore personal identity, and strengthen affective dimensions in daily life.

Their engagement extends to spiritually-oriented discussion communities such as Komuji (Komunitas Pemikiran Kreatif Inklusif Indonesia), which integrates spirituality with contemporary issues including art, politics, and economics. These findings align with Sodik and Sujibto (2023), who argue that urban Sufism is not anti-modernist but rather adaptive and reflective of social realities. In this regard, Sufi practice functions not merely as a space for worship, but as an arena for

reconstructing religious identity amidst the fragmentation of meaning brought about by digital disruption (Bakri, Wahyudi, and Andriyani 2025).

In-depth interviews revealed that collective dhikr practices generate inner peace and intergenerational solidarity. AF (23), a university student, shared:

> *"Initially, I joined because a friend invited me. But after participating in dhikr and suluk several times, I felt I had rediscovered a sense of true inner calm that had long been missing."*

Participant observation during a night dhikr session at Al-Fatah Mosque revealed a quiet and contemplative atmosphere, where around 30 young saliks sat in a circle, chanting La ilaha illa Allah, interspersed with emotional expressions of tears and embraces. This embodied and collective spiritual experience was found to strengthen psychological stability and resilience, as confirmed by Smith et al. (2013) in their study on adolescent spiritual well-being.

The motivations behind youth involvement in the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order in urban West Java reflect complex and multidimensional spiritual needs. Based on interviews and participant observations, these motivations can be classified into three categories, each grounded in distinct psychosocial and spiritual dimensions. First, the Objective Motive-referring to the quest for a deeper and more holistic sense of meaning. Many youths reported disillusionment with modern materialistic and competitive life narratives, seeking instead transcendental experiences to fill existential voids. This aligns with Liamzon and Banzon-Librojo (2025), who found that youth spiritual exploration often arises from the need to formulate a stable identity through authentic religious experiences. Second, the Emergency Motive-associated with psychological pressure from urban living and digital distraction. Here, Sufi practice serves as a coping mechanism for stress, alienation, burnout, and emotional disorder. Dhikr and wirid offer therapeutic spiritual tools that enhance self-regulation and psychological resilience, as supported by studies by Krok et al. (2023) and Munsoor & Munsoor (2017). Third, the Organic Motive-emerging from experiences of identity crisis or destructive life patterns, including addiction, violence, or social alienation. For several informants, joining the Sufi community marked a turning point, with suluk, religious study, and spiritual guidance from the murshid seen as a path to inner transformation and religious reformation. These findings resonate with Nica (2020), who noted that individuals undergoing personal crises tend to reconstruct identity through involvement in spiritual communities that provide collective meaning and emotional safety.

FZ (25), a freelance worker, stated:

"Since joining this Sufi order, I feel more structured and emotionally stable. I'm not as easily angered or stressed, even when work becomes chaotic. I've learned how to guard my heart better."

These insights affirm the literature that Sufi practices provide emotional structure and collective meaning-making for youth (Louw & van Niekerk, 2024). The following table summarises motivations and experienced transformations based on field informants:

Table 1. Classification of Motivations and Spiritual Transformations

Informant Category	Motivation for Joining	Experienced Transformation
University Student	Curiosity, invited by peers	Inner calm, enhanced academic motivation
Freelance Worker	Urban stress, professional pressure	Emotional stability, improved patience
Former Addict	Escape from destructive lifestyle	Active in social-religious activities, "reborn"

Thus, the revitalisation of traditional spirituality through Sufi practice not only shapes personal religious experiences but also functions as a collective meaning-making instrument capable of addressing identity dislocation and crises of meaning among youth in the digital era. This aligns with studies by Bakri et al. (2025) and Peterson (2008), which highlight the critical role of communal spiritual practices in fostering sustainable religious identity and mental health.

Youth participation in the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya order reflects their need to rediscover meaningful life purpose amidst urban pressures and the flood of digitalisation. Practices such as dhikr and suluk transcend ritual obligations, becoming therapeutic spaces for healing and the reconstruction of religious identity. This is consistent with findings by Bakri et al. (2025) and Krok et al. (2023), who affirm that collective spiritual experiences can enhance psychological resilience and redirect young individuals' life paths. These motivations fall into three categories: objective (the pursuit of meaning and inner peace), emergency (a response to mental strain from urban competition and digital fragmentation) (Zaid et al. 2022), and organic (the need for transformation after destructive life experiences) (Musa 2015; Romanova, Chernichkin, and Morozova 2021).

From the collected data, several patterns indicate key trends in the revitalisation of youth spirituality. First, there is a shift from symbolic religiosity to functional spirituality, where Sufi practice is no longer seen

merely as cultural heritage, but as a personal necessity for emotional and existential recalibration. Second, youth involvement exhibits communal and cross-class tendencies, creating egalitarian collective spaces for spiritual strengthening. Third, practices such as dhikr and suluk demonstrate significant therapeutic effects, reinforcing the consistency between ritual engagement and emotional stability. Fourth, there emerges an integrative pattern linking traditional spirituality with contemporary discourse-such as economy, art, and ecology-manifested in forums like Komuji, demonstrating that Sufi orders can adapt to digital ecosystems and modern issues.

These findings suggest that youth engagement in the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya order is not a passive retreat from modernity, but rather an active reconstruction of a spirituality relevant to contemporary dynamics. The Sufi order proves effective as a medium for identity transformation, offering emotional stability, inner peace, and critical reflection on urban pressures and digital disorientation. In this context, Sufi communities act as collective meaning-making agents, integrating Islamic tradition with the spiritual needs of today's youth. Academically, these findings extend our understanding of communal spirituality as an adaptive strategy for religious identity formation among the digital generation. Practically, they highlight the importance of supporting inclusive and contextual spiritual spaces as part of policies aimed at enhancing mental health, religious moderation, and the empowerment of Muslim youth in the postmodern era.

2. The Sufi Order as a Social Space and Collective Identity

Field findings indicate that the practice of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order in urban areas of West Java functions not only as a site of spiritual worship but also as a social space uniting young people from diverse backgrounds-students, informal workers, and even former delinquents. At the zawiyahs observed in Bandung and Cimahi, routine activities such as collective dhikr, weekly riyāḍah (spiritual exercises), and classical Islamic study circles serve as points of encounter that foster emotional and spiritual solidarity among members. This space nurtures egalitarian social relations, where individuals feel unconditionally accepted and receive psychosocial support often absent in fragmented and competitive everyday interactions.

One sālik (spiritual seeker), YZ (28 years old), stated in an interview:

> *"Outside, I feel inferior and alone. But here, it feels like family. We pray for one another, strengthen one another. I feel accepted without having to pretend to be someone else."*

This statement affirms that the ṭarīqah community cultivates a strong and inclusive sense of belonging. These findings align with Sethi et al. (2021), who observed that spiritual communities provide authentic participatory spaces for youth, enhancing relational skills and social cohesion in supportive environments.

Researchers also noted the use of distinctive symbols and terminologies-such as specific attire during riyāḍah, the concept of sulūk, and personal relationships with the murshid-that reinforce the construction of collective identity. This identity is not exclusivist but rather flexible and adaptive to socio-cultural dynamics. In the digital era, the ṭarīqah also employs platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram to disseminate dhikr schedules, study materials, and daily spiritual messages, forming a digital Sufi ecosystem that maintains transcendental depth. This phenomenon affirms the ṭarīqah as a counter-public community capable of engaging with digital spaces without compromising its spiritual core (Sodik and Sujibto 2023; Zaid et al. 2022).

Data visualisation is presented through interview excerpts and a classification of social interaction forms. A student, AF (23 years old), expressed:

"In the Sufi order, I feel like I can be myself. I don't need to wear a mask. Everyone here listens and encourages-even when I'm at my lowest."

Meanwhile, a former addict now active in religious outreach said:

"I used to have no one. But since joining sulūk, I've found a place to come home to. I can talk, learn, and not be judged. I feel saved-literally."

These quotations demonstrate that spiritual experience within the ṭarīqah is inseparable from supportive social relationships. The internalisation of Sufi values occurs not only through doctrinal instruction but also through collective encounters, emotional togetherness, and repeated ritual practices. Thus, the construction of young people's religious identity unfolds through communal mediation that intertwines transcendence with social solidarity.

Table 2. Forms of Social Interaction within the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Community

Dimension of Interaction	Social-Spiritual Function
Collective Dhikr	Strengthens spiritual and emotional connection within shared rituals.
Weekly Riyāḍah	Trains collective discipline and deepens interpersonal bonds.
Classical Sufi Study Circles	Facilitates reflective dialogue and traditional understanding of Sufism.

Psychosocial Support	Builds a network of care and emotional safety among members.
Digital Community Communication	Maintains ongoing connection via spiritual messages and scheduling.

Field observations reveal that the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Order serves not only as a site of spiritual worship but also as a social network that gathers youth from diverse social strata into inclusive participatory spaces. Activities such as collective dhikr, riyāḍah, and the study of Sufi texts facilitate social cohesion, identity formation, and continuous emotional support. The community provides a safe space that bridges the gaps of social alienation and psychological pressure typical of urban and digital life. Researchers also observed that online communication via WhatsApp and Telegram has enhanced connectivity among members while exemplifying the adaptability of Sufi communities to technological developments (Sodik and Sujibto 2023; Zaid et al. 2022).

Overall, Sufi practice offers a holistic social and spiritual experience. Young participants feel embraced without concealing their identity wounds. They strengthen each other through intensive interactions framed by collective ritual practice. Emotional support and the formation of a traditional Islamic habitus occur simultaneously through encounters with the murshid and the internalisation of Sufi values. This indicates that the Sufi order not only addresses spiritual needs but also the human need for community and meaning in daily life (James, Fine, and Turner 2015; Sethi et al. 2021; L. Smith, Webber, and DeFrain 2013).

Furthermore, data analysis reveals four key patterns: (1) the formation of strong emotional bonds within dhikr and riyāḍah gatherings; (2) the strengthening of social cohesion through the murshid's role as both spiritual and moral anchor; (3) the community's openness to diverse social backgrounds; and (4) the integration of technology into spiritual life, sustaining relational continuity (Barron and Martin 2016; Sodik and Sujibto 2023). Collectively, these patterns create a resilient, socially contextualised network of solidarity across classes and generations.

These findings reinforce the understanding that the ṭarīqah community can serve as an effective arena for reconstructing the religious identity of urban youth, particularly in a postmodern context marked by fragmentation and psychosocial stress. Sufi practices within such communities not only instil spirituality but also function as social navigation tools, spaces of self-acceptance, and dynamic platforms for collective identity formation. Thus, this study contributes critical insights to discourses on the interrelation between traditional religious communities, youth identity transformation,

and social resilience in the digital age (Charbonneau 2007; Louw and van Niekerk 2024; L. Smith, Webber, and DeFrain 2013).

3. Resistance to Cultural Dislocation and Ideological Purification

Field findings indicate that the practice of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order among urban youth in West Java functions not only as a means of personal spiritual development but also as a symbolic space of resistance against ideological purification that negates local Islamic traditions. Most informants-who previously engaged in formal, scripturalist religious experiences-reported tensions between rigid Islamic narratives and their spiritual needs, which were more reflective, affective, and culturally rooted.

One informant, MA (26 years old), formerly active in a scripturalist da'wah group, stated:

> *"I was taught that everything was bid'ah. If there was no dalil, it was haram. But over time, I felt empty. In the tarekat, I was invited to feel Islam, not just memorise it."*

This statement reflects a shift from a normative-textual approach to an embodied Sufi experience, where spirituality is not solely rational-theological but internalised through daily practices that foster self-awareness and emotional connection with traditional Islamic values. As noted by Sodik and Sujibto (2023), urban youth engagement in tarekat communities often arises in response to disillusionment with formal religiosity severed from cultural roots. This is corroborated by Kashyap and Lewis (2013), who found that Islam increasingly serves as a personal identity anchor for young Muslims, even as religious practices become more individualised and selective.

Participant observation in a study circle and dhikr session at Zawiyah Hidayatullah in Bandung revealed that the community serves as a more open and contextual space for religious dialogue. One participant remarked:

> *"We don't need to be anti-modern to remain santri. It's this tradition that helps keep us sane in today's world."*

This comment illustrates how the tarekat forms a resilient yet flexible cultural bastion against identity and cultural dislocation in the digital era. Youth no longer perceive traditional religious practices as burdensome legacies but rather as symbolic capital for reconstructing an authentic and adaptive spiritual identity (Louw & van Niekerk, 2024; Smith et al., 2013). This finding aligns with Diaz (2011), who observed that Qadiriyya rituals in the European diaspora contributed to the reconstruction of local Muslim youth identity.

Additional narratives reinforce the tarekat's role as a space of identity transformation:

MA (26), former campus da'wah activist:*"I used to be active in textual Islamic circles. But eventually, I felt spiritually dry. In this tarekat, I don't just understand the scriptures-I feel the meaning. There is love, not just law."*

ZF (22), university student: "*The first time I joined a kitab kuning study session, it felt like coming home. It's not nostalgia-it's about reconnecting with my roots."*

WN (24), santri and content creator: "*Now I also produce da'wah content, but I blend it with tarekat traditions. People say my da'wah feels different-softer, they say."*

These narratives highlight that the tarekat is not merely a space for spiritual reflection, but also a site of symbolic resistance to Islamic discourses that sever ties with tradition. This resonates with Peterson (2008) and Bekkaoui et al. (2011), who emphasise the role of Sufism in crafting moderate, non-confrontational cultural alternatives to ideological purification. Piraino (2021) likewise observes that neo-Sufi networks in European spiritual festivals foster similar forms of transnational cultural solidarity.

To illustrate the patterns emerging in the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya's resistance to ideological purification and cultural dislocation, the following thematic classification is provided:

Table 3. Aspect Form of Expression Symbolic Meaning

Aspect	Form of Expression	Symbolic Meaning
Critique of purification	Rejection of bid'ah labels and severance from tradition	Repositioning religious interpretation to favour local, sanad-based traditions (Fanani and Iswanto 2023; Sander 2019)
Identity reconstruction	Engagement in dhikr, suluk, and classical Islamic learning	Recovery of internalised and contextual local spirituality (Diaz 2011; Sodik and Sujibto 2023)
Cultural resistance	Integrating tarekat traditions into contemporary media	Religious innovation grounded in values and lived experience, not formalism (Arifin 2012; Jamal et al. 2022)

Alternative community	A safe space for ex-scripturalists, former delinquents, and the spiritually disoriented	A reconciliatory space for identity reconstruction in a modern context (James, Fine, and Turner 2015; Zaid et al. 2022)

This visualisation affirms that the tarekat functions as a Sufi counter-public-a symbolic arena that not only resists puritanical hegemony but also cultivates a cultural alternative integrating spiritual values with contemporary socio-cultural realities (Charbonneau 2007; Francisco and Kearney 2016). Dhikr and suluk practices constitute forms of embodied resistance to modern fragmentation, while simultaneously offering collective and resilient identity regeneration.

Overall, youth engagement with the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya is not merely a form of private religiosity but a strategic search for a spiritual space aligned with their cultural identity. Many informants previously felt alienated by rigid and literalist Islamic models that prioritised memorisation and jurisprudence over compassion and emotional resonance. Through dhikr, kitab studies, and suluk, they have found a welcoming community that facilitates spiritual healing and the reconstruction of meaningful lives (Bekkaoui, Larémont, and Rddad 2011; Sethi et al. 2021).

Four engagement patterns emerged from the field data, characterising the tarekat as a symbolic site of resistance to ideological purification:

1. A shift from normative-textual religiosity to a more reflective, affective, and contextual spiritual experience.
2. Sufi practices as pathways for reconstructing religious identities rooted in local cultural values.
3. The tarekat community as a safe space for youth facing spiritual or identity dislocation.
4. The rise of digital Sufi da'wah as a non-confrontational resistance strategy suited to contemporary media ecosystems (Arifin 2012; Diaz 2011; Piraino 2021).

Theoretically, these findings suggest that communal spirituality in tarekat can be conceptualised as an active cultural agency responding to identity crises and social fragmentation in postmodernity. Sufi practices emerge not only as religious expressions but as crucial instruments for forming resilient, inclusive, and culturally anchored religious identities. Practically, orders like Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya create dialogical spaces between tradition and modernity, serving as social models that integrate spirituality, technology, and communal cohesion (Sounaye and Lucchese 2021; Webb 2011; Zaid et al. 2022).

4. Discussion: The Tarekat as a Space for Religious and Cultural Transformation among Youth

This study investigates the engagement of urban youth in the practices of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order as a response to religious identity crises, cultural dislocation, and the pressures of contemporary digital life. The findings reveal that the tarekat serves not merely as a medium for strengthening individual spirituality but also functions as an inclusive, adaptive, and transformative socio-communal space. Three principal findings emerge: first, the revitalisation of traditional spirituality through Sufi practices has proven effective in enhancing psychological resilience and deepening the search for meaning; second, tarekat communities foster emotional solidarity and collective identity across social classes; and third, participation in the tarekat acts as a symbolic resistance to ideological purification through reflective, affective, and value-based approaches. These findings affirm the role of the tarekat as both a cultural and spiritual agency relevant to shaping the religious habitus of Muslim youth in the postmodern era.

Youth engagement in the tarekat arises from the need for spiritual spaces that mediate the tension between digital modernity and the continuity of tradition. Sufi practices such as dhikr, suluk, and the study of classical Islamic texts offer not only embodied and collective transcendental experiences but also balance the affective and cognitive dimensions of religious life (Peterson 2008; Sodik and Sujibto 2023). The tension between rigid scripturalist narratives and the need for relational spirituality positions the tarekat as a meaningful alternative for the younger generation. In a digital ecosystem that tends to encourage religious individualisation and identity fragmentation, tarekat communities offer ritual structure, personal spiritual guidance, and a collective atmosphere that fosters a strong sense of belonging (Sethi et al. 2021; B. J. Smith 2013).

Whereas previous studies such as Smith et al. (2013), Krok et al. (2023), and Bakri et al. (2025) have emphasised the positive impact of Sufi practices on individual psychological resilience and spiritual wellbeing, this study broadens the scope by highlighting the significance of the collective dimension and the community's role as a transformative agent. It also strengthens the arguments of Charbonneau (2007) and Francisco & Kearney (2016), who view Sufism as a symbolic and affective counter-public in response to the homogenisation of Islamic identity. However, this research presents a novel contribution by illustrating how tarekat practices are being digitally transformed and strategically utilised by young people to construct a religious identity that is flexible, contextual, and grounded in sanad-based tradition.

Socially, the study demonstrates that tarekat practices contribute to the recovery from identity crises, strengthen psychosocial resilience, and provide an egalitarian dialogue space for members from diverse social backgrounds. Historically, the findings indicate that the spiritual heritage of Nusantara Islam is being revitalised not by the older generation but by urban youth in search of meaning through spiritual stillness and continuity of tradition. Ideologically, tarekat communities act as sites of cultural resistance to exclusive scripturalism and simultaneously serve as social laboratories for the development of a more empathetic, relational, and inclusive religiosity (Arifin 2012; Charbonneau 2007; Diaz 2011).

Nonetheless, a critical reflection on the findings reveals potential dysfunctions that warrant attention. First, excessive romanticisation of traditional practices may obscure internal inequalities within tarekat structures, such as overly hierarchical authority relations or resistance to reform on contemporary issues like gender equality. Second, if community expansion is not accompanied by deepening spiritual substance, there is a risk of degeneration into merely symbolic communities devoid of transformative capacity. Third, the use of digital media within the tarekat presents ambiguity between the expansion of da'wah and the challenge of maintaining spiritual authenticity (Fanani and Iswanto 2023; Zaid et al. 2022).

Based on these findings, policy actions are recommended that recognise and strengthen the role of tarekat communities as agents of spiritual recovery and the formation of moderate religious identities. Government and religious organisations should integrate Sufi approaches into programmes for religious moderation, mental health, and youth character education. Supporting Sufi digital literacy, community leadership training, and the development of Islamic curricula rooted in Sufi values constitute concrete steps towards expanding inclusive and resilient alternative spiritual spaces. Such measures also represent cultural strategies for addressing the ongoing crisis of spirituality and religious identity among urban youth in the postmodern era.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the engagement of urban youth in the practices of the Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya Sufi order constitutes an active response to the crisis of religious identity, cultural dislocation, and the pressures of digital life. The key findings indicate that Sufi practices not only enhance individual spiritual resilience but also shape inclusive, reflective, and transformative social spaces. Through participation in dhikr, suluk, and the study of classical

Islamic texts, young people are able to reconstruct life's meaning, negotiate Islamic identity in a contextualised manner, and find emotionally and spiritually supportive communities.

The scholarly contribution of this research lies in its integrative approach to traditional spirituality and the challenges of the digital era. It extends the discourse on Sufism by positioning the tarekat as a socio-cultural agent in the formation of the religious habitus of the younger generation. This approach combines Sufi perspectives, identity theory, and digital community dynamics, offering a new framework for understanding the role of collective spirituality in shaping a resilient, rooted, and adaptive religiosity. The study also introduces the concept of the tarekat as a counter-public-an alternative space that provides symbolic resistance to ideological purification and the fragmentation of meaning.

Nevertheless, this research acknowledges certain limitations. Its geographical focus on urban areas in West Java does not reflect the diversity of tarekat practices across other regions of Indonesia. Moreover, the involvement of informants predominantly from a single tarekat community may affect the variety of perspectives represented. Future research is therefore recommended to explore inter-tarekat and inter-regional dynamics, and to examine the roles of gender, economic background, and politics in shaping the spiritual experiences of Muslim youth in greater depth.

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Contesting Sunni Orthodoxy: Wahhabism in the Chechen Conference and the Thought of Hasyim Asyari

Mohamad Anang Firdaus
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri, Kediri, Indonesia
anangfirdausm@gmail.com

Abdillah Afabih
Mahad Aly Hasyim Asyari Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang, Indonesia
abdillah@tebuireng.ac.id

Maulanida
Mahad Aly Hasyim Asyari Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang, Indonesia
maulanida@tebuireng.ac.id

Muhammad Asad
Universitas Hasyim Asyari, Jombang, Indonesia
muhammadasad@unhasy.ac.id

M. Rizki Syahrul Ramadhan
Mahad Aly Hasyim Asyari Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang, Indonesia
syahrulramadhan@tebuireng.ac.id

Ananda Prayogi
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia
anandaprayogi003@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara komparatif dua konstruksi ortodoksi Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (ASWAJA) yang saling berseberangan, yaitu definisi global dari Konferensi Chechnya 2016 dan pemikiran lokal-tradisional KH. Hasyim Asyari di Indonesia. Pentingnya penelitian ini terletak pada urgensi memahami bagaimana konsep ortodoksi Sunni dibentuk dan dipertahankan dalam konteks ketegangan antara wacana global dan otoritas keagamaan lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis isi terhadap dua teks utama, yakni dokumen resmi Konferensi Chechnya dan Risalah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah karya Hasyim Asyari, serta didukung oleh literatur sekunder dan analisis kontekstual. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa definisi ASWAJA versi Chechnya bersifat eksklusif dan

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rigid, mengecualikan kelompok Wahhabi dan Salafi-Takfiri, sedangkan Hasyim Asyari membangun ortodoksi yang berakar pada sanad, ijma, dan praktik keagamaan lokal yang etis dan moderat. Implikasi dari temuan ini adalah pentingnya mempertimbangkan dimensi historis, sosial, dan epistemologis dalam merumuskan ortodoksi Sunni, serta perlunya pendekatan yang lebih inklusif untuk menjaga kohesi umat Islam di tengah fragmentasi ideologis. Penelitian ini menawarkan kontribusi orisinal dengan menyandingkan dua paradigma yang jarang diperbandingkan secara sistematis, serta membuka ruang baru dalam studi ortodoksi, otoritas keagamaan, dan glokalisasi Islam di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: ASWAJA; Ortodoksi Sunni; Wahabisme; Konferensi Chechnya; Hasyim Asyari.

Abstract

This study aims to comparatively analyse two contrasting constructions of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah (ASWAJA) orthodoxy: the global definition advanced by the 2016 Chechen Conference and the traditional-local thought of KH. Hasyim Asyari in Indonesia. The significance of this research lies in its urgency to understand how Sunni orthodoxy is constructed and maintained amid tensions between global discourse and local religious authority. Employing a qualitative approach and content analysis method, the study focuses on two primary texts-the official Chechen Conference statement and Hasyim Asyaris Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah-supported by secondary literature and contextual analysis. The findings reveal that the Chechen definition of ASWAJA is rigid and exclusive, explicitly excluding Wahhabi and Salafi-Takfiri groups, while Hasyim Asyari offers a contextualised and adaptive orthodoxy grounded in sanad, ijmāʿ, and local religious practices that are ethical and moderate. The implications of these findings underscore the need to consider historical, social, and epistemological dimensions in formulating Sunni orthodoxy, and highlight the importance of adopting a more inclusive approach to preserve Muslim unity in the face of ideological fragmentation. This study offers an original contribution by juxtaposing two paradigms that are rarely compared systematically, opening new avenues for research on orthodoxy, religious authority, and the glocalisation of Islam in Indonesia.

***Keywords**: ASWAJA; Sunni Orthodoxy; Wahhabism; Chechen Conference; Hasyim Asyari*

Introduction

In recent years, the narrative that excludes Wahhabism from Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (ASWAJA) has gained traction as a significant phenomenon in Indonesias religious discourse. This reflects a shift in theological understanding as well as the dynamics of local Islamic identity shaped by global discourses. This narrative gained momentum following the 2016 Chechnya Conference, which explicitly defined ASWAJA through the

theological framework of Asharism-Maturidism, the four Sunni madhhabs, and the Sufism of al-Junayd-implicitly excluding Wahhabism from Sunni orthodoxy (Syarkun and Huda 2020). This view has been reinforced by national media outlets such as Laduni.id, Sanadmedia.com, and Islampers.com, and has been widely disseminated via social media by groups like the Young NU Generation. Globally, the redefinition of ASWAJA aligns with a moderate, ethico-political paradigm shaped by political history, such as Ibn Taymiyyas reinterpretation of the caliphate as a rational institution (Anjum 2012; Feener 2008). In Indonesia, meanwhile, organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah use ASWAJA as a theological foundation, although without explicitly defining it, thus allowing for diverse interpretations in religious practice (Saleh 2008).

This anti-Wahhabi narrative has had considerable sociopolitical impact, including increased scrutiny of Salafi-Wahhabi-affiliated educational institutions perceived as promoting radicalism, as well as the emergence of social segmentation and sectarian political mobilization, such as during the 2019 presidential election (Sumadinata, Affandi, and Yulianti 2019; Zulkifli 2024). Media play a crucial role in spreading this narrative, mediating traditional authority and shaping public opinion through digital religious representations (Campbell 2022; Mishol-Shauli and Golan 2019). Hence, it is essential to critically examine the relationship between the global construction of religious identity and the expression of local Islam in Indonesia-not only as an academic agenda within contemporary Islamic studies, but also as a practical effort to formulate inclusive approaches to intra-Islamic diversity amidst growing polarization and radicalism.

Previous studies reveal at least three main tendencies in the discourse on ASWAJA and the Chechnya Conference. First, literature on the Chechnya Conference often focuses on the responses of international figures such as the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who represent theological and diplomatic perspectives on the exclusion of Wahhabism, but tend to overlook local dimensions (Kuswandi 2019; Rahman 2016). More broadly, international discourse is shaped by global narratives on terrorism in the post-9/11 era, in which countries like Russia have employed anti-terror rhetoric to frame religious conflicts-such as in Chechnya-as part of a global war against Islamic radicalism (Bakke 2009; Russell 2005). This has reinforced the exclusion of groups like the Salafi-Wahhabis from global orthodoxy while legitimizing specific political agendas.

Second, a number of studies approach ASWAJA from a textualist perspective, emphasizing classical sources without contextualizing the teachings within the contemporary socio-religious realities of Indonesia (Islampers 2018; Mihrob 2019). This method aligns with the tradition of

textual formalism, which overlooks the sociological dimension and everyday practices of Indonesian Muslims (Guodong 2021; Hunter 2023), failing to address local challenges such as ideological plurality, digital media, and the convergence of Islamic identities. Third, very few studies to date have systematically compared the global discourse-such as ASWAJA as defined in the Chechnya Conference-with the conceptualization offered by local thinkers such as Hasyim Asyari. Although studies in the fields of glocalization and cross-tradition comparison exist (Kola 2013; Zhang, Chan, and Teasdale 2018), their limited application in the context of Islam Nusantara suggests a lack of exploration into how global orthodoxy discourses intersect-or clash-with local religious authority. This gap underscores the urgency of the present study to fill a critical void in contemporary Islamic literature, particularly in terms of integrating local traditions with transnational ideological pressures on Sunni identity in Indonesia.

This study seeks to address that gap by offering a systematic comparison between the construction of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (ASWAJA) identity in global discourse and local Islamic traditions in Indonesia. Specifically, it analyzes and compares the definition of ASWAJA formulated at the 2016 Chechnya Conference with the thought of Hadratussyaikh Hasyim Asyari in his treatise Risalah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah, in order to evaluate the position of Wahhabism within Sunni orthodoxy according to these two authoritative sources. Using a qualitative approach and content analysis method, this study also explores the epistemological and ideological implications of each narrative on the configuration of Sunni identity in Indonesia. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the interaction between transnational religious narratives and local authority construction, offering a more contextual and critical lens through which to understand the dynamics of Islamic orthodoxy in the face of globalized religious discourse.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in the argument that there exists an epistemological and ideological tension between the definition of ASWAJA as formulated by the Chechnya Conference and the scholarly construction developed by Hasyim Asyari within the Islamic traditions of the archipelago. The Chechnya Conference explicitly presents an exclusionary narrative toward Wahhabism, framing it as a deviation from Sunni orthodoxy-a stance reinforced by the post-9/11 global framing that links Salafism with transnational radicalism (Bakke 2009; Russell 2005). In contrast, Hasyim Asyari emphasizes the importance of traditional continuity, scholarly lineage (sanad), and local ulama authority as the basis for maintaining social and religious cohesion amid the plurality of madhhabs (Mihrob 2019; Saleh 2008). While both perspectives reject extremism, their approaches to

Wahhabism differ substantially-the Chechnya Conference adopts a de jure approach based on global scholarly consensus, while Hasyim Asyari uses a de facto approach grounded in local practice and social stability. This argument forms the basis for investigating how global narratives and local authority construct the boundaries of religious identity exclusivity, and how local responses, such as that offered by Hasyim Asyari, remain relevant in the face of global Islamic discourse homogenization and hegemonization (Cvetkovich and Kellner 2018; Kola 2013).

This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis to examine in depth the theological constructions and normative criteria of ASWAJA as reflected in two primary texts: the official document of the 2016 Chechnya Conference and the classical treatise Risalah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah by Hasyim Asyari. This method was chosen because content analysis allows the researcher to explore implicit meanings in religious texts and deconstruct the argumentative structure and ideology shaping religious identity narratives. Primary data sources include the original Chechnya Conference document obtained from official publications and credible media reports, as well as the Risalah manuscript published by Maktabah al-Turats al-Islami. Supplementary sources include news articles, academic writings, and statements from relevant figures published through platforms such as Islampers.com (2018) and Sanadmedia.com (2022), as well as interviews with key informants. Data collection was conducted through library research, examining primary documents, scholarly articles, and other secondary sources to identify key passages representing the construction of religious identity. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, identifying core themes in both texts-such as theology, jurisprudence, Sufism, and attitudes toward Salafi-Wahhabi ideology-and comparing the emerging normative arguments while also considering the sociopolitical contexts of each source to understand their underlying ideological motivations.

Results and Discussion

1. The Concept of ASWAJA in the Chechnya Conference: Global Theological Exclusivism

The theological standard on creed (ʿaqīdah) according to the Chechnya Conference Statement explicitly defines Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah (ASWAJA) as those who follow the Ashʿari or Maturidi schools in doctrine-including the Ahl al-Hadith who adopted the principle of tafwīḍ (Consignment) (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). The principle of

tafwīḍ-entrusting the meaning of ambiguous (mutashābih) verses to God-is upheld as an epistemic reference to safeguard the purity of monotheism and avoid anthropomorphism. This formulation reveals a methodological exclusivism in defining Sunni orthodoxy and implicitly excludes groups such as Salafi-Takfiri and Wahhabi, who are considered to deviate from such theological approaches. The document even asserts that these groups are responsible for takfīr, destruction, bloodshed and distortion of the image of Islam (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). This statement resonates with the Sufi identity of the Chechen people, long a means of resistance against the post-Soviet expansion of transnational ideologies. Epistemologically, the tafwīḍ approach reflects a core characteristic of Ashʿarite theology, balancing rationality with the sanctity of revelation-clearly distinguishing it from the literalist methods of Wahhabism.

In line with this theological foundation, the conference statement also defines ASWAJA in the domain of jurisprudence (fiqh) as those who follow one of the four canonical legal schools: *the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii or Hanbali schools in Islamic law and jurisprudence* (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). This reinforces the position of madhhab-based fiqh as normative authority, while rejecting non-madhhab approaches or modern Islamic legal reconstructions that are not rooted in classical tradition. Movements such as Salafi-Takfiri and Wahhabi, which tend to reject taqlīd and prefer direct literal interpretation of texts, are thus excluded from the ASWAJA category as defined by the conference. This stance cannot be separated from the post-Soviet Chechen geopolitical context, where social-religious stability is heavily reliant on established scholarly authority. By reaffirming the four madhhabs as the boundaries of orthodoxy, the conference emphasizes the continuity of the Sunni legal heritage and draws a clear line against puritanical jurisprudence seen as undermining communal harmony and fostering global radicalism (Akaev 2009; Litvinova 2021; Wilhelmsen 2004).

The spiritual-ethical dimension of ASWAJA is also strongly emphasized through Sufism (taṣawwuf). The conference statement declares that an integral part of ASWAJA is *the path of spirituality in its manifestation as science and practice, namely the adornment of noble character and purification of the heart, as exemplified in the order of al-Junayd and the imams who followed his way* (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). The invocation of Imam al-Junayd as a model of orthodox Sufism demonstrates that the exclusivism promoted by the conference extends beyond theology and jurisprudence to the spiritual realm. Sufism is positioned as a marker of authentic Sunni identity and as a differentiator from groups that reject the inner dimension of Islam, such as Wahhabis, who regard Sufism as bidʿah (heretical innovation). This reflects the historical role of Sufi orders like the

Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya in Chechnya as instruments of resistance against colonialism and as sources of social solidarity (Akaev 2009; O'Leary 2014). The political endorsement of Sufism by Ramzan Kadyrov following the fall of the Soviet Union further cemented its role as part of a project to reconstruct a moderate, locally rooted, anti-extremist Islamic identity (Bram and Gammer 2013; Litvinova 2021). In theological discourse, Junayd al-Baghdādī is recognized for harmonizing orthodoxy and mystical experience (Karacan 2023; Ohlander 2020), making his legacy particularly relevant in legitimizing the Grozny model of spirituality.

In the realm of daʿwah (religious propagation), the conference emphasizes that ASWAJA carries a universal mission to counteract radicalism and violence. ASWAJAs preaching is defined as *a safety valve by which takfīr and extremism may be dismantled. It will also be achieved by sending messages of safety, peace and mercy to the whole of creation* (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). This statement marks a transformation of Sunni orthodoxy into a strategic narrative-one that is not only religious but also political. The values of rahmatan lil-ālamīn, embodied in the ASWAJA daʿwah tradition, align with the moderate approaches of institutions such as Al-Azhar and Nahdlatul Ulama, which emphasize *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tawāzun* (balance), and *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance) (Daud, Amri, and Latif 2023; Pektas 2021). In Chechnya, this ethos of daʿwah is instrumentalized as a post-conflict reconciliation tool and as a strategy to consolidate local power against the threat of transnational puritanism. Thus, the ASWAJA preaching style promoted in Grozny is not only inclusive and peaceful, but also functions as a counter-narrative to the transnational, exclusive, Salafi-jihadist movement.

The apex of ASWAJAs exclusivism appears in the conferences treatment of ideological threats. The statement starkly warns that the spread of deviant teachings has *given rise to dozens of false concepts and incorrect interpretations, the result of which has been takfīr, destruction, bloodshed and distortion of the image of Islam* (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). This pronouncement provides a theological and political rationale for excluding Salafi-jihadist groups, who are seen not only as theological deviants but also as key actors in delegitimizing traditional Islamic authority (Ali 2019; Weismann 2017). In the post-9/11 global context, takfīri ideology has contributed significantly to the stigmatization of Islam in Western media and public discourse, damaging the image of Sunni Islam as a moderate mainstream school (Douai and Lauricella 2014; El-Aswad 2013). By defining ASWAJA as the antithesis to radicalism and as a symbol of social-religious stability, the conference articulates a theological and geopolitical strategy aimed at defending orthodox Sunni identity against transnational ideological disruption.

Table 1. ASWAJA Pillars According to the Chechnya Conference and Excluded Groups

Aspect	ASWAJA Criteria (Chechnya Conference 2016)	Excluded Groups
Creed	Follows Ashʿari or Maturidi theology, including Ahl al-Hadith with tafwīḍ	Salafi, Wahhabi, Takfiri
Jurisprudence	Adheres to one of the four Sunni legal schools: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali	Non-madhhab, literalist anti-taqlīd groups
Sufism	Embraces spirituality grounded in al-Junayds teachings, focusing on tazkiyat al-nafs and noble character	Wahhabi, anti-Sufi groups
Preaching	Peaceful and inclusive daʿwah, rejects violence and takfīr, promotes rahmah for all creation	Salafi-jihadists, radical militant groups
Threats	Rejects misinterpretations that cause chaos, bloodshed, and distortion of Islam	Extremist ideologies, Wahhabi-jihadists

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that the definition of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah as agreed upon at the 2016 Chechnya Conference is highly specific, strict, and exclusive. The five key aspects that shape the Grozny version of ASWAJA-creed, jurisprudence, spirituality, preaching, and ideological response-are formulated to delineate the boundaries between orthodoxy and deviation in Sunni Islam. Groups such as Wahhabis, Salafi-Takfiri, and transnational jihadists are explicitly excluded, being seen as methodologically deviant and as threats to the socio-political stability of traditional Islam (Akaev 2009; Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016; Weismann 2017).

From the data presented, four main patterns emerge:

1. Methodological exclusivism, marking strict theological boundaries through Ashʿari-Maturidi and tafwīḍ frameworks while rejecting literalist approaches (Karacan 2023; Ohlander 2020).
2. Preservation of classical Islamic legal authority, recognizing only the four traditional madhhabs as resistance to unsanctioned legal reconstruction (Akaev 2009; Litvinova 2021).

3. Spiritual integration, with Junayds Sufism forming an ethical foundation for authentic Sunni identity and acting as a cultural-political resistance (Bram and Gammer 2013; O'Leary 2014).
4. Anti-extremist preaching articulation, positioning ASWAJA as a frontline counter to global radicalism (Douai and Lauricella 2014).

These findings suggest that the 2016 Chechnya Conference aimed not merely to define ASWAJA theologically, but also as a geopolitical and ideological strategy to address transnational challenges. The conference positions ASWAJA as a category of orthodoxy that functions both spiritually and intellectually, as well as a tool to contain violent ideologies within the Muslim ummah. Epistemologically, this formulation reinforces traditional Islam in the face of extremist delegitimization. Politically, it represents a project to reconsolidate moderate Sunni identity, supporting domestic stability and global harmony, while offering a comparative framework to local expressions of orthodoxy such as Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia, which shares similar commitments to tradition, peace, and resistance against radicalism (Daud, Amri, and Latif 2023; El-Aswad 2013; Wilhelmsen 2005).

2. The Concept of ASWAJA in the Thought of Hasyim Asyari: Tradition, Sanad, and Social Balance

In Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah, KH. Hasyim Asyari affirms that the core of Sunni doctrine is founded upon the Ashʿarite and Māturīdite theological schools. He writes: *wa ataqidu anna madhhab ahl al-ḥaqqi ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāah huwa madhhab al-Asyariyīn wa al-Māturīdīyīn*, which translates as: *I believe that the true doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah is that of the Ashʿarites and the Māturīdites* (Asyʿari 1926). This declaration highlights his theological preference rooted in classical kalām authority, reinforcing Ashʿarism as a pillar of Sunni orthodoxy in Indonesia. This doctrine promotes a balance between scriptural (naqlī) and rational (ʿaqlī) evidences while rejecting anthropomorphism in the understanding of divine attributes, particularly as a critique of the literalist tendencies found in Wahhabi thought. This finding resonates with contemporary scholarship, which identifies Ashʿarism as the backbone of Indonesian Sunni identity (Dhuhri and Jakfar 2020; Saleh 2008).

In the legal domain, Hasyim Asyari stresses the importance of adhering to one of the four recognised Sunni schools of jurisprudence. He states: *fa al-firqah al-nājiyah al-madhkūrah fī al-ḥadīth hum ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāah wa hum atbā aḥad al-aimmah al-arbaah*, indicating that the firqah nājiyah refers to the followers of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah who adhere to one of the four Imams (Asyʿari 1926). This perspective reflects a strong commitment

to the principle of *taqlīd madhhabī* (jurisprudential conformity), as a form of reverence for classical legal authority and continuity of sanad (transmission). In the Indonesian context, this view underpins Nahdlatul Ulamas (NU) legal authority through classical Shāfiʿī works such as Fath al-Qarīb and Tuhfat al-Muḥtāj (Syamsu Rizal 2011; Thohari 2013), while also accommodating contextualisation via the concept of ʿurf within the framework of the madhhab (Najib 2020).

The spiritual dimension of Islam also receives considerable emphasis. Hasyim Asyari writes: *wa fī al-taṣawwuf yatamassakūna bi madhhab Abī Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī wa Abī al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, raḍiya Allāh anhumā* (Asyʿari 1926), reflecting his alignment with the spiritual paths of two major Sunni Sufi figures. Their approach emphasises *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), moral conduct, and harmony between *sharīʿah* and *ḥaqīqah* (Griffel 2009; Hillenbrand 2020). This approach aligns with practices in the Shādhilī and Naqshbandī orders, which emphasise the stages of takhallī, taḥallī, and tajallī as methods of spiritual development (Fuadi et al. 2024; Subandi, Chizanah, and Subhan 2022; Taleb 2020). In Indonesia, such Sufi orientation flourishes in pesantren and ṭarīqah like Naqshbandiyya Khālidiyya Jalāliyya, contributing to public morality (Rosidi et al. 2024).

Concerning religious ethics, Hasyim Asyari asserts that moral character is an integral part of faith. He writes: *wa min uṣūl ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāah: ijtināb al-bida wa al-muḥāfaẓah alā makārim al-akhlāq,* which translates as: *Among the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah is to avoid bidʿah and to uphold noble character* (Asyʿari 1926). This underscores that ethics are not merely social conventions but expressions of spiritual piety and adherence to the Sunnah. Principles such as *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity), *ittiḥād* (unity), and *uswah ḥasanah* (exemplary conduct) are foundational to Islamic ethics that support moderation and leadership by example (Bakar, Mardiyah, and Ikhwan 2023). The Sufi-based educational model has also been shown to enhance student character development (Rahmat and Yahya 2021), while al-Ghazālī, as Hasyims spiritual reference, developed a theological ethic centred on self-purification (Özkan 2022).

Regarding scholarly authority, Hasyim Asyari writes: wa alayka bi al-ulamā al-muttaqīn, wahrub min ahl al-bida wa al-zaygh, walam anna al-nās alā aqsām thalāthah: ālim rabbānī, wa mutaallim alā sabīl najāh, wa hamaj raā, atbā kulli nāiq, which may be rendered as: You must follow pious scholars and avoid those of innovation and deviation... and know that people fall into three categories: the learned divine, the seeker of knowledge on the path of salvation, and the masses who follow every noise-maker (Asyʿari 1926). This concept frames scholars as central figures of spiritual and intellectual authority, safeguarding the community from deviation. In todays context, this

view is critical for maintaining sanad continuity and methodological integrity amid religious populism, which often disregards both (Bakar, Mardiyah, and Ikhwan 2023; Rahmat and Yahya 2021). For Hasyim Asyari, scholarly authority rests not only on rational competence but also on moral integrity, scholarly lineage, and social responsibility.

Table 2. ASWAJA Pillars According to Hasyim Asyari and Excluded Groups/Practices (Asyʿari 1926)

Aspect	**ASWAJA Pillars (KH. Hasyim Asyari, 1997)**	**Excluded Groups/Practices**
Creed	Adheres to Ashʿarite and Māturīdite doctrines. *huwa madhhab al-Asyariyīn wa al-Māturīdīyīn*	Muʿtazilites, Wahhabis, and both hyper-rationalist and extreme literalist theologians
Jurisprudence	Follows one of the four schools: Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, Ḥanbalī. *atbā aḥad al-aimmah al-arbaah*	Non-madhhab individuals or those claiming ijtihād without legitimate scholarly authority
Sufism	Emulates the Sufism of al-Ghazālī and al-Shādhilī. *yatamassakūna bi madhhab... al-Ghazālī... al-Shādhilī*	Deviant or syncretic mystical practices that neglect the *sharīʿah*
Religious Ethics	Upholds noble character and avoids innovation. *al-muḥāfaẓah alā makārim al-akhlāq wa ijtināb al-bida*	Sectarian fanaticism, intolerance, and extremist attitudes towards difference
Scholarly Authority	Follows pious scholars with *sanad*. *alayka bi al-ulamā al-muttaqīn...*	Individuals lacking scholarly lineage issuing deviant interpretations or fatāwā

In Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah, Hasyim Asyari constructs ASWAJA as a holistic Islamic framework built on five key foundations: Ashʿarite-Māturīdite theology, adherence to the four schools of jurisprudence (with preference for Shāfiʿī), Sufism in the tradition of al-Ghazālī and al-Shādhilī, ethical moderation rejecting violence, and knowledge authority rooted in sanad and ijmāʿ (Asyʿari 1926). This formulation is both theological

and sociological in nature, as it explicitly excludes groups such as the Qadariyya, Mujassimah, Wahhabis, and extremist takfīrī movements like ISIS. Table 2 systematically presents these boundaries, outlining the principles and exclusive criteria of ASWAJA from Hasyim Asyaris perspective. These findings align with recent studies highlighting sanad as the epistemic infrastructure of classical Islam (Badaruddin and Mahyuddin 2021; Tamjidnor et al. 2025) and emphasising that the rejection of takfīrism is integral to Islams inclusive ethical tradition (Badar, Nagata, and Tueni 2017; Daheri et al. 2023).

From the analysed data, four main patterns can be identified in Hasyim Asyaris construction of ASWAJA. First, there is epistemological consistency in using sanad and ijmāʿ as the foundation of scholarly authority-anchored in classical tradition and serving as a defence against illegitimate religious authority (Asyʻari 1926; Tamjidnor et al. 2025). Second, his theological approach shows moderation by avoiding the extremes of Muʿtazilī rationalism and Wahhabi literalism, both of which are explicitly excluded (Asyʻari 1926; Badaruddin and Mahyuddin 2021). Third, the integration of jurisprudence, Sufism, and ethics illustrates that Hasyims religiosity is not limited to legalism but extends to spiritual experience and harmonious social ethics (Hillenbrand 2020; Rahmat and Yahya 2021). Fourth, the exclusivity asserted by Hasyim Asyari functions as a protective mechanism for traditional Islamic identity-one that is inclusive, contextual, and resistant to ideological transnationalism (Badar, Nagata, and Tueni 2017; Daheri et al. 2023).

These findings demonstrate that KH. Hasyim Asyaris concept of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah is not merely a theological formulation but a strategic socio-epistemological construction aimed at preserving the integrity of Islam Nusantara. By outlining five essential elements-Ashʿarite-Māturīdite creed, adherence to the four madhhabs, Ghazālian-Shādhilian Sufism, moderate religious ethics, and sanad-based knowledge authority-Hasyim Asyari defines the boundaries of orthodoxy while filtering religious ideologies incompatible with Indonesias cultural religiosity (Asyʻari 1926; Badaruddin and Mahyuddin 2021). In todays context, this framework serves as an antithesis to takfīrī movements and populist religiosity that disregard intellectual lineage and moderation (Daheri et al. 2023; Tamjidnor et al. 2025). Furthermore, the data reaffirm NUs position as the authoritative heir to Indonesian Sunni tradition, wherein the legacy of Hasyim Asyari continues to guide responses to pluralism and modern transformation through consistent methodology and ethical integrity (Bakar, Mardiyah, and Ikhwan 2023; Rahmat and Yahya 2021). In this light, the study enriches our

understanding of how Sunni orthodoxy in Indonesia is dynamically shaped by classical texts, historical experience, and contemporary challenges.

3. Epistemological and Ideological Tensions: Global vs Local in Defining Wahhabism

The theological standard of ASWAJA orthodoxy, as formulated by Hasyim Asyari in *Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah*, affirms three principal pillars underpinning traditional Sunni thought in the archipelago: Ashʿarite creed, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and Ghazālian-Shādhilian Sufism (Asyʻari 1926). This framework is reinforced by a strong commitment to the authority of *sanad* (scholarly transmission) and *ijmāʿ* (consensus of scholars) as foundations of epistemic legitimacy, and by a clear rejection of *takfīrism* and sectarian deviation. These principles are broadly aligned with the parameters of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah as defined in the 2016 Chechnya Conference, which recognises Ashʿarite-Māturīdite theology, the four Sunni legal schools, and Junaydian Sufism as prerequisites for inclusion within Sunni orthodoxy (Who are the Ahl al-Sunna? A clarification of the methodology of the Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama`a in relation to tenets of faith, jurisprudence and spirituality and the effects that deviating from it has on world affairs 2016). Imam Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī also contributed to this theological edifice by integrating the Ahl al-Ḥadīth as a complementary element of orthodoxy, alongside rationalist and Sufi strands (Al-'Anjari n.d.). In Southeast Asia, ASWAJA orthodoxy has developed distinctively, internalising local socio-religious dynamics and representing the tension between global authorities-such as Wahhabism with its scripturalist leanings-and local movements that prioritise spiritual and cultural dimensions (Azra 2013; Yunus and Amiruddin 2021). This conception has produced a religious system that is not only normative but also ethical, spiritual, and socio-cultural, capable of adapting to contemporary challenges while retaining its traditional roots.

The epistemological tension between global and local perspectives regarding Wahhabisms position within Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah reveals substantial differences in defining Islamic orthodoxy. Globally, Wahhabism is still recognised by certain authorities-such as Ahmad al-Tayyib of al-Azhar and Yusuf al-Qaradawi-as part of ASWAJA, emphasising the need to unite Salafis and Sufis under a vision of Islamic moderation (Qaraḍāwi 2004). Locally in Indonesia, however-particularly within the *pesantren* tradition and Nahdlatul Ulama-Wahhabism is criticised for rejecting Sufism, *sanad*, and *ijmāʿ*, and is considered to promote social fragmentation through *takfīr* practices (Asyʻari 1926; Azra 2013). This view is bolstered by the 2016 Chechnya Conference, which explicitly excludes Salafi-Takfiri groups from

ASWAJA on grounds of violence and exclusivist truth claims (Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). At a global level, Wahhabi movements also encounter resistance in local contexts such as Central Asia, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, where they are perceived as threats to local values, religious pluralism, and political stability (Khamidov 2013; Potezica 2007; Thibault 2022). In Indonesia, Wahhabisms exclusion is historically rooted in its longstanding opposition to Sufi and culturally embedded Islamic practices. This tension reflects not only ideological conflicts but also an epistemic contest between traditional, *sanad*-based cultural authority and a global narrative that is legalistic, scripturalist, and often misperceived as monolithic.

The cultural identity of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah (ASWAJA) in Indonesia is formed by the confluence of theological heritage, *pesantren* traditions, and culturally embedded religious practices. Hasyim Asyari asserts that ASWAJA is defined by Ashʿarite theology, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and the Sufism of al-Ghazālī and al-Shādhilī (Asyʿari 1926), practically expressed in rituals such as *tahlīl*, *ziyarah* (visitation of graves), and *istighāthah* (supplicatory prayers) (Azra 2013). Within this framework, *kiai* and *pesantren* function as custodians of orthodoxy and mediators between traditional Islam and the challenges of modernity (Fauzi 2012). The rejection of Wahhabism-which denies the legitimacy of *sanad*, *ṭarīqah*, and local religious heritage-marks an epistemological differentiation between ASWAJA and puritanical movements (Asyʿari 1926). This identity is further institutionalised through educational and organisational bodies such as IPNU, PMII, and GP Ansor, and reinforced through linguistic dynamics: Arabic is reserved for sacred domains, while local languages and Bahasa Indonesia serve as mediums of cultural integration (Ilma and Rohmah 2024). In a broader landscape, ASWAJA plays a dominant role in shaping national Islamic discourse, while simultaneously contending with challenges from modernist, sectarian, and cultural-political movements, particularly in regions like West Sumatra (Syarif 2018; Taufik 2024). Thus, ASWAJA in Indonesia is not merely a representation of traditional Sunni theology, but also a resilient cultural construct responsive to both local and global dynamics.

Table 3. The Position of Wahhabism from Local and Global Perspectives

Perspective	Authoritative Source	Status of Wahhabism	Rationale
Local (Indonesia/NU)	Hasyim Asyari (1997), Azra (2013)	Outside ASWAJA	Rejects Sufism, *sanad*, *ijmāʿ*; causes social discord
Global (al-Azhar)	Ahmad al-Tayyib (2016)	Part of ASWAJA	Identified with non-extremist Salafiyya and Ahl al-Ḥadīth
Global (Chechnya)	*Who Are the Ahl al-Sunna?* (2016)	Not explicitly mentioned; Salafi-Takfiri excluded	Rejects violence, *takfīr*, and absolutism in truth claims

The conceptualisation of ASWAJA by Hasyim Asyari encompasses not only Ashʿarite creed, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and Ghazālian-Shādhilian Sufism, but also establishes *sanad* and *ijmāʿ* as criteria of orthodoxy. In practice, this standard functions as a boundary-marker, distinguishing between groups included within ASWAJA and those excluded. Tensions emerge particularly in evaluating Wahhabisms status: in Indonesia, especially within Nahdlatul Ulama circles, Wahhabism is considered outside the bounds of ASWAJA due to its rejection of Sufism, scholarly authority, and traditional rituals like *tahlīl* and *ziyarah* (Asyʿari 1926; Azra 2013). This view contrasts with global perspectives, such as that of Ahmad al-Tayyib of al-Azhar, who continues to recognise Wahhabism as part of ASWAJA so long as it remains non-extremist. Meanwhile, the Chechnya Conference of 2016 firmly excluded Salafi-Takfiri movements but did not mention Wahhabism explicitly-highlighting global ambiguity in defining the limits of orthodoxy. Table 3 illustrates this divergence: local perspectives tend to prioritise ethical and social dimensions, whereas global views are more legalistic and accommodating of non-extremist Salafiyya variants. This affirms that the epistemological tension between local and global is not merely a matter of differing perspectives but reflects a fundamental divergence in how Islamic heritage is interpreted and preserved.

From the reviewed data, four main patterns emerge in the dynamics of ASWAJA orthodoxy across local and global contexts. First, a pattern of local exclusivism is evident in the *pesantren* and NU stances in Indonesia, which

impose strict theological standards based on Ashʿarite creed, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and Sufism, while rejecting Wahhabism for its denial of *sanad*, *ijmāʿ*, and traditional religious practices. Second, a pattern of global inclusivism is represented by figures such as Ahmad al-Tayyib and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who continue to include Wahhabism within the ASWAJA spectrum as long as it is not extreme. Third, a pattern of epistemological tension emerges from differing sources of authority: local approaches are rooted in *sanad* and cultural tradition, whereas global approaches lean towards legalism and scripturalism. Fourth, a pattern of resistance to homogenisation is observable in the response of local communities to global narratives that are perceived as misaligned with the lived religious realities of the Nusantara.

These findings reveal that ASWAJA orthodoxy in Indonesia cannot be understood solely through a normative theological lens, but must also be seen as an epistemological and cultural construct rooted in *sanad*-based authority, scholarly consensus, and religious practice embedded within *pesantren* and local Islamic praxis. The tension between global inclusivity-which in some cases still embraces Wahhabism as part of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah-and local exclusivity-which tends to reject it-reflects a contest between two regimes of authority: one that is textual-scriptural and transnational, and another that is locally historicised and grounded in tradition. Theoretically, this affirms the view in contemporary Islamic studies that orthodoxy is not a fixed entity, but a discursive outcome negotiated between global and local forces (Grewal 2016; Yunus and Amiruddin 2021). The implication is that any examination of ASWAJA must move beyond its normative dimensions and incorporate the politics of knowledge, identity dynamics, and power relations that shape religious authority. These findings broaden our understanding that Islamic orthodoxy-particularly in the Indonesian context-is a contested field shaped by the interplay between tradition and modernity, local wisdom and global pressures, continuously (re)defining the contours of Muslim religious identity.

4. Discussion: Implications for Religious Discourse

This study finds that the concept of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah (ASWAJA) is shaped by two dominant and conflicting paradigms-epistemologically and ideologically: the paradigm of global theological exclusivism, as formulated in the 2016 Chechnya Conference, and the traditional-local paradigm, as developed by Hasyim Asyari in Indonesia. The Chechnya Conference underscores three central pillars: Ashʿarite-Māturīdite theology, adherence to the four recognised legal schools, and pure Sufism in the tradition of al-Junayd, while explicitly excluding groups such as Salafi-Takfiri and Wahhabi, perceived as sources of disorder in the Muslim world

(Chechnya Conference Delegates 2016). By contrast, Hasyim Asyari conceptualises ASWAJA as a tradition that is not merely theological but also social and cultural, rooted in *sanad*-based scholarship, scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*), and culturally embedded religious practices such as *tahlīl* and *ziyarah* (Azra 2013). This epistemological tension arises from diverging sources of religious authority: the global approach tends to be legalistic and transnational, whereas the local model is grounded in traditional continuity and socio-religious harmony (Tamjidnor et al. 2025; Yunus and Amiruddin 2021).

This tension is closely tied to differing historical and political contexts. The Chechnya Conference was influenced by post-9/11 geopolitical dynamics and the revival of traditional Islam in Chechnya, associated with Sufism as a form of resistance against Wahhabism and global jihadist networks (Akaev 2009; Russell 2005; Wilhelmsen 2004). Meanwhile, Hasyim Asyari responded to the spread of Wahhabism in Indonesia by emphasising a *sanad*-based and moderate Sufi approach as a counterbalance to social and religious fragmentation (Asy'ari 1926; Badar, Nagata, and Tueni 2017). Thus, the local exclusion of Wahhabism represents resistance to a scripturalism that disconnects from classical authority chains, while global inclusivity reflects political compromise with non-extremist variants of Salafism (Qaraḍāwi 2004).

This study affirms previous findings such as those by Syarkun & Huda (2020) and Kuswandi (2019), which highlight the exclusivist tendencies of the Chechnya Conference, but extends the scope through a comparative analysis between global discourse and local thought. While prior studies have focused on responses from international figures such as al-Tayyib and al-Qaradawi (Rahman, 2016), or relied on textualist approaches (Islampers 2018; Mihrob 2019), this research integrates ideological and epistemological analysis by drawing on both local and global discursive contexts. Furthermore, it addresses a gap in literature on Islamic glocalisation, which has rarely explored the construction of Sunni orthodoxy from a Nusantara perspective (Kola 2013; Zhang, Chan, and Teasdale 2018), and reinforces the notion that orthodoxy is relational-produced through dominant discourse and power (Al-Wardi 2013; Grewal 2016).

The significance of these findings lies in showing that Sunni orthodoxy is neither neutral nor uniform, but rather a contested space between local authority and global power. Socially and historically, the Chechnya Conference utilised theological exclusion as a means of legitimising moderate Islam in the context of anti-radical politics, while Hasyim Asyaris thought constructs orthodoxy on the basis of social harmony and the continuity of the *pesantren* tradition (Fauzi 2012; Noor 2023). This tension affirms the

arguments of Roy (2004) and Asad (2003) that orthodoxy is a historical product of power relations, rather than a fixed theological category. Accordingly, the study expands the field of contemporary Islamic studies by stressing the importance of contextual interlinkages between text, authority, and social practice in the formation of Sunni identity.

A critical reflection on these findings reveals the dual function of ASWAJA orthodoxy. On one hand, it can serve as a safeguard against radicalism and help maintain the continuity of a moderate Islamic identity rooted in Sufism, *sanad*, and scholarly consensus (Badaruddin and Mahyuddin 2021; Tamjidnor et al. 2025). On the other, when applied rigidly, such theological exclusivism risks narrowing the space for intra-Islamic dialogue and fostering new forms of sectarianism that contradict Islams inclusive principles. In the Indonesian context, this could lead to social fragmentation and the delegitimisation of alternative yet historically and culturally valid Islamic expressions (Syarif 2018; Taufik 2024). Therefore, caution must be exercised in employing orthodoxy as a policy tool, ensuring it is not weaponised as an instrument of ideological exclusion.

Based on these insights, several policy and educational strategies are recommended:

1. Curricular reform - Islamic education curricula should present the history and diversity of legal schools objectively and proportionately.
2. Structured intra-Islamic dialogue - Inter-organisational and inter-*pesantren* dialogues should be facilitated to prevent the domination of a singular narrative.
3. Contextualised deradicalisation programmes - Efforts to counter extremism must involve local *ʿulamā* to avoid marginalising traditional authority.
4. Critical Islamic digital literacy - Enhanced digital literacy is needed to counter sectarian disinformation in the public online sphere.

These steps will reinforce social cohesion and sustain a moderate Islamic identity that is contextual, grounded in tradition, and open to global dialogue.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the definition of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāah (ASWAJA) is not monolithic, but rather the outcome of a discursive construction negotiated between global forces and local religious authority. The central findings indicate that the 2016 Chechnya Conference promoted a theological exclusivism grounded in Ashʿarite-Māturīdite creed, adherence to the four recognised schools of jurisprudence, and Junaydian Sufism-explicitly excluding Wahhabism and Salafi-Takfiri movements from the framework of

Sunni orthodoxy. In contrast, the thought of KH. Hasyim Asyari presents a more contextual and adaptive model of orthodoxy, based on *sanad* (scholarly transmission), *ijmāʿ* (consensus), and local traditions such as Ghazālian Sufism and *pesantren* practices in Indonesia.

Scholarly, this research offers a significant contribution to the field of contemporary Islamic studies by filling a gap in the literature regarding systematic comparisons between global and local ASWAJA narratives. It further enriches the discourse on Islamic glocalisation by demonstrating how traditional values can persist-and even challenge-transnational exclusivist currents. The thematic-comparative approach employed has successfully identified the power relations inherent in the formation of orthodoxy, reinforcing the epistemic role of *pesantren* and Nahdlatul Ulama as bastions of moderate Islam in Indonesia.

Nonetheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. Chief among them is the narrow scope of data, which focuses solely on two primary textual sources without including contemporary social actors in the field. Future research could be enhanced by ethnographic perspectives or interviews with members of the *pesantren* community and policymakers, which would deepen the analysis. In addition, restricted access to internal documents from the Chechnya Conference limited this studys ability to explore the political dimensions more thoroughly.

Accordingly, further research is recommended to examine the actual practices of acceptance or rejection of Wahhabism within Indonesian Muslim society through more extensive fieldwork. Such inquiry would provide a fuller and more contextualised understanding of how Sunni orthodoxy is dynamically negotiated in the real world.

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Islamic Tradition and Digital Resistance: Constructing Moderate Religious Habitus in Indonesian Pesantren Salaf

Ahmad Saepudin
STIE Syariah Indonesia Purwakarta
ahmadsaepudin@sties-purwakarta.ac.id

Fajar Rohandy
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
fajar.rohandy@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana praktik keagamaan tradisional yang dijalankan secara kolektif di pesantren Salaf berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan perilaku keagamaan yang moderat dalam komunitas Nahdliyin. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi visual di pesantren wilayah Bandung, Purwakarta, dan Bekasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa praktik seperti tahlilan, maulid, ziarah kubur, dan pengajian kitab kuning bukan hanya berfungsi sebagai ritual, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme internalisasi nilai spiritual dan sosial yang membentuk habitus keagamaan yang inklusif, beradab, dan kontekstual. Pesantren juga menunjukkan resistensi adaptif terhadap arus dakwah digital yang purifikatif dengan mengembangkan konten berbasis sanad dan literasi media berbasis tradisi. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan pentingnya pelestarian tradisi sebagai strategi pendidikan karakter dan deradikalisasi keagamaan berbasis budaya lokal. Kontribusi orisinal dari penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi antara praktik tradisi, teori habitus religius, dan respons digital pesantren sebagai aktor mediatif dalam lanskap keislaman kontemporer Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Islam moderat; pesantren; tradisi keagamaan; dakwah digital; habitus keagamaan.

Abstract

This study aims to explore how traditional religious practices collectively performed in pesantren Salaf contribute to shaping moderate religious conduct

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within the Nahdliyin community. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation in pesantren across Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi, and were subsequently analysed thematically. The main findings reveal that practices such as tahlilan, maulid celebrations, grave visitation (ziarah kubur), and classical Islamic book recitations (pengajian kitab kuning) serve not only as ritual expressions but also as mechanisms for the internalisation of spiritual and social values. These values, in turn, construct an inclusive, civilised, and contextual religious habitus. The pesantren also demonstrate adaptive resistance to puritan digital preaching trends by developing content rooted in sanad (religious authority chains) and media literacy grounded in traditional teachings. The implications of this research underscore the significance of preserving religious traditions as a strategy for character education and culturally-based religious deradicalisation. The study's original contribution lies in its integration of religious tradition, the theory of religious habitus, and digital responses of pesantren as mediating actors within the contemporary Islamic landscape in Indonesia.

***Keywords**: Moderate Islam; Pesantren; Religious Tradition; Digital Dakwah; Religious Habitus.*

Introduction

In Indonesian Muslim society, particularly within the *Nahdliyin* community, religious traditions such as *tahlilan*, *haul*, grave visitation (*ziarah kubur*), the recitation of *sholawat*, and the commemoration of Islamic holy days not only serve as expressions of spirituality but also shape collective identity and preserve local culture. These traditions are deeply rooted in the life of *pesantren* Salaf, which are widely established in regions such as Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi. *Pesantren* play a dual role as institutions of traditional Islamic education and as custodians of *Islam Nusantara* values-moderate, tolerant, and contextually grounded (Azra 2013; Mujahid 2021; Mukhibat and Ghafar 2019).

According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Open Data Jabar (2021), West Java Province holds the highest number of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia, with a total of 8,728 institutions spread across 27 regencies and cities. The ten regions with the highest number of *pesantren* include Tasikmalaya Regency (1,344), Bogor Regency (1,093), and Garut Regency (1,055). This data highlights the significant role of *pesantren* as educational institutions and centres for strengthening community-based religious traditions in West Java (Alhamidi 2022).

However, in the past two decades, *pesantren* have come under pressure from the currents of globalisation, the digitalisation of *dakwah*, and the growing influence of ideological purification movements such as Salafism.

Online *dakwah* via social media has given rise to digital *ustadz* figures who reject local religious traditions and promote a rigid scripturalism (Raya 2025; Rosidi 2021; Zamhari 2022). This disruption has triggered identity confusion, particularly among younger generations of Muslims increasingly exposed to transnational Islamic discourses that often diverge from local cultural values. In this context, *pesantren* Salaf function as cultural and spiritual strongholds, defending a contextual and moderate form of Islam (Fahrurrazi 2019; Jufri et al. 2024).

To gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics, a review of previous studies is essential. First, historical and institutional studies on *pesantren* have extensively examined aspects such as governance, curriculum, and social transformation (van Bruinessen, Wajidi, and Iffati 2012; Hussin, Mohamad, and Ghanad 2017; Permani 2011; Prof. Dr. H. Abuddin Nata 2012), yet they have not adequately addressed the internal processes by which students' religious conduct is shaped. Second, studies on *Islam Nusantara* and cultural acculturation highlight the role of *pesantren* in preserving local traditions such as *tahlilan*, *haul*, and *ziarah kubur* (Asrawijaya 2022; Fahrurrozi 2015; Ismail and Asso 2024; Jubba et al. 2022), but fall short in examining their impact on the formation of religious *habitus*. Third, research on religious moderation and conduct explores how *pesantren* foster moderate Islamic attitudes through the lens of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Fuadi 2022; Hannan 2020; Meliani, Basri, and Suhartini 2023; Sabiq et al. 2022; Sary et al. 2024; Zaid et al. 2022) yet tends to be sectoral and does not comprehensively integrate traditional religious practices with the construction of student behaviour.

This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature by explicitly linking traditional religious practices in *pesantren* Salaf to the development of religious conduct within the *Nahdliyin* community. Specifically, it analyses how rituals such as *tahlilan*, *haul*, *ziarah kubur*, and the recitation of *sholawat*, routinely practised in *pesantren*, inculcate values of spirituality, moderation, and socio-religious commitment. It also explores how these traditions are dynamically reinterpreted amid social changes and ideological challenges, particularly those posed by purification movements.

This research is grounded in the assumption that religious traditions in *pesantren* Salaf serve not only as rituals but also as mechanisms for value socialisation in shaping the religious behaviour of *Nahdliyin* communities. Rituals such as *tahlilan* and *haul* are believed to foster moderate spiritual awareness through collective engagement with the values of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. In the context of social change and purist currents, these traditions help preserve a local Islamic identity that is inclusive and culturally

rooted. The central hypothesis of this research is that the continuity of religious traditions within *pesantren* Salaf significantly contributes to the formation of moderate, cohesive, and adaptive religious patterns among *Nahdliyin*.

This study employs a qualitative approach using a fieldwork design to explore how religious traditions in *pesantren* Salaf shape the religious conduct of the *Nahdliyin* community. The units of analysis are traditional *pesantren* located in three main areas: Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi, which were purposively selected for their representativeness in preserving traditional Islamic practices. The choice of a qualitative approach is grounded in the aim to uncover meanings, symbols, and religious experiences that cannot be quantified. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with *kiai* and senior *santri*, participatory observation of religious practices such as *tahlilan*, *ziarah kubur*, and *pengajian kitab kuning*, as well as relevant institutional documents. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, field notes, and visual documentation. The data were analysed thematically through a process of categorisation, coding, and interpretation to identify patterns of meaning related to the formation of religious *habitus* and *pesantren* resistance to digital *dakwah* purification.

Results and Discussion

1. Traditional Religious Practices as Instruments of Moderation in Salaf Pesantren

Field observations conducted at several Salaf pesantren in the regions of Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi reveal that traditional religious practices-such as *tahlilan* (collective remembrance), *maulid* recitations, commemorations of deceased scholars (*haul*), grave visitations (*ziyarah*), and *ratiban* (litanies)-continue to be observed consistently. At Al-Mardhiyyatul Islamiyyah Pesantren (Purwakarta), students participate in *tahlilan* every Thursday evening, led directly by the *kiai* or senior *ustaz* (Field Observation, 2025). In Bekasi, monthly pilgrimages to the graves of the pesantren's founders are held as a means of reinforcing spiritual lineage (*sanad*). In Bandung, the weekly recitation of *Maulid Barzanji* is mandatory for all students, serving as a forum for the internalisation of Islamic manners (*adab*) and love for the Prophet Muhammad (Interview with Kiai A., 2025).

Beyond ritual activities, students are also required to attend *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) lessons each morning and evening, which cover not only *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *tawhid* (theology), but also emphasise *tasawwuf* (spirituality) and social ethics. Practices such as *tawasul* (intercessory prayers) and *yasinan* (recitation of Surah Yasin) are also

conducted to commemorate Islamic holidays or express communal solidarity when a student falls ill or passes away.

The *kiai* describe these traditions as spiritual disciplines that cultivate inner sensibility (*rasa*), rather than mere fulfilment of legal obligations. In their view, these practices constitute spiritual pedagogy that fosters social empathy, compassion, and mutual respect among Muslims. As one *kiai* expressed:

"This is not merely an obligation of worship but a path to nurture gratitude and love for fellow Muslims. Tradition is a heritage that guides the hearts of the students." (Kiai F., Interview, 2025)

Religious traditions in pesantren serve as instruments of collective character formation, the inculcation of Islamic moderation, and the preservation of a tolerant and contextual local Islamic identity (Bilfagih 2016; Fahrurrozi 2015; Jubba et al. 2022; Zamhari 2022). Previous studies affirm that pesantren do not merely transmit Islamic jurisprudence but internalise Islamic practices that are adaptive to local cultures and responsive to contemporary challenges (Athoillah et al. 2024; Lukens-Bull 2008; Rosidi 2024).

Table 1. Traditional Religious Practices in Salaf Pesantren

Religious Practice Aspect	Values Instilled
Tahlilan	Spirituality & Collectivity
Maulid Barzanji	Love for the Prophet & Manners (*Adab*)
Ziyarah Kubur	Spiritual Lineage (*Sanad*) & Reverence for Ulama
Ratiban and *Tawasul*	Tradition Awareness & Intercession (*Shafa'ah*)
Kitab Kuning Lessons	Islamic Knowledge, Spirituality, & Ethics
Yasinan and Communal Solidarity	Empathy & Social Solidarity

These practices, as observed across pesantren in Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi, not only function as routine religious rituals but also as a medium for value education. They are embedded in students' daily lives and experienced as a path for cultivating manners, empathy, and tolerance. For instance, at Al-Mardhiyyatul Islamiyyah, the Thursday *tahlilan* serves as a spiritual forum that reinforces collective consciousness and reverence for tradition. In Bekasi, the grave visitations are regarded as expressions of respect for scholarly transmission, while in Bandung, the *Maulid Barzanji* sessions nurture affection for the Prophet and collective manners (Interview with Kiai A., 2025).

Beyond the teaching of *fiqh* and *tawhid*, *kitab kuning* lessons underscore *tasawwuf* and social ethics, reinforcing religious moderation. Practices such as *yasinan* and *tawasul* also serve as emotional support systems during times of illness or bereavement among students. As one *kiai* stated, "*Tradition is not merely a ritual obligation, but a path that nurtures gratitude and love among fellow Muslims. It is a legacy that guides students' hearts"* (Kiai F., Interview, 2025). In the context of contestation with Salafism-which advocates purification and rejects local traditions-these traditional practices act as a social and spiritual bulwark for preserving Indonesia's moderate Islamic identity (Lukens-Bull 2008; I. F. A. Nasution et al. 2024; Zamhari 2022).

From the observations and interviews, four key patterns emerged in the implementation of traditional religious practices as instruments of religious moderation. First is the consistent observance of rituals such as *tahlilan*, *maulid*, *ziyarah kubur*, and *ratiban*, which are consciously sustained as mechanisms of spiritual and moral education. Second, these rituals are collectively interpreted as cultivating communal bonds and reverence for scholarly lineage. The practices in Bekasi and Bandung are not merely symbolic but pedagogical-fostering love and respect for the Prophet and the ulama.

Third, the educational dimension of pesantren is evident in the daily *kitab kuning* lessons, which impart jurisprudence, spirituality, and ethics-thus fortifying students' moral foundations in society. Fourth, traditions such as *yasinan* and *tawasul* function as collective responses to social events, instilling empathy and cohesion among students. These patterns show that traditional practices are not contrary to Islamic moderation but serve as effective mechanisms for sustaining an inclusive and adaptive Nusantara Islam identity. These findings affirm previous research on pesantren's role in safeguarding *wasatiyyah* (moderate) values amidst digital religious purification and social fragmentation (Lukens-Bull 2008; F. A. Nasution, Irmayani, and Sazali 2024; Zamhari 2022).

Overall, traditional religious practices such as *tahlilan*, *maulid*, *ziyarah*, and classical text recitations are not merely symbolic rituals but mechanisms for instilling moderate Islamic values. They form collective spaces for fostering empathy, manners, and tolerance, which manifest in the students' religious habitus. Within Bourdieu's framework, these practices constitute a religious habitus continuously reproduced within the social space of the pesantren, shaping moderate and contextual religious dispositions (Lukens-Bull 2008).

Moreover, such practices represent cultural resistance to Islamic purification movements associated with Salafism and Wahhabism. In this

regard, pesantren function not only as centres of Islamic knowledge transmission but also as arenas for constructing a culturally rooted, inclusive Nusantara Islam. These collective practices reflect how pesantren preserve spiritual capital in the face of global religious homogenisation (Jahroni 2018; Wahib 2017; Zamhari 2022).

The implication of this study reinforces the argument that tradition-based education in pesantren plays a crucial role in cultivating moderate and tolerant religious character. This also critiques formalised state approaches to religious moderation that often overlook lived communal practices. Thus, the Salaf pesantren model may serve as a reference for developing de-radicalisation strategies grounded in local culture and *wasathiyah* Islamic tradition (Burga and Damopolii 2022; F. A. Nasution, Irmayani, and Sazali 2024).

2. Formation of Nahdliyin Religious Habitus Through Tradition

Findings from observations and interviews conducted in several Salafi pesantren in the Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi regions reveal that the formation of religious habitus among santri (Islamic boarding school students) is shaped not only through formal instruction using classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), but also through structured and repeated internalisation of religious traditions. In all three regions, the lives of santri are immersed in institutionalised ritual activities-such as tahlilan, yasinan, ziyarah kubur, Maulid Barzanji recitations, and classical text studies-which are collectively practised in daily life. For instance, at Al-Mardhiyyatul Islamiyyah Pesantren (Purwakarta), santri undergo strict habituation in manners towards the kiai, such as kissing hands, maintaining respectful posture during lessons, and refraining from speaking carelessly in the teacher's presence. In Bekasi, monthly visits to the grave of the pesantren's founder serve not only as acts of reverence but also as spiritual exercises to reinforce the chain of religious knowledge (sanad) and eschatological awareness. Meanwhile, in Bandung, weekly Maulid Barzanji recitations are consistently accompanied by the kiai's reflections on the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary life, fostering inner manners (adab batin) and emotional religious attachment among santri (Interview with Kiai A., 2025).

Beyond formal rituals, santri also attend kitab kuning sessions twice daily, covering not only jurisprudence (fiqh) and creed (aqidah), but also Sufism (tasawuf) and social ethics. These lessons are delivered using sorogan and bandongan methods, which emphasise interpretative depth and real-life application, such as guarding one's speech, honesty, and compassion towards others (Bali and Susilowati 2019; Rohman and Muhtamiroh 2022; Sauri et al. 2016). Rituals are also present in emotionally significant moments, such as

during haul (commemoration of deceased scholars), the death of a santri, or major Islamic holidays, where the entire pesantren community gathers for tahlil, yasinan, and collective prayer. These events serve as spaces of emotional education, fostering empathy, solidarity, and deep spiritual awareness. As one kiai noted: "Knowledge can be taught, but 'feeling' must be cultivated. Tradition is not a burden; it is our way of integrating with Islamic values" (Interview with Kiai F., 2025).

These findings align with the concept of religious habitus as explained by Naaman (2017a) and Asror (2017), which refers to the formation of spiritual dispositions through repeated routines, symbols, and social interactions within religious spaces such as pesantren. Religious habitus is not merely a product of textual learning but is embodied through holistic experiences within the pesantren ecosystem (Lukens-Bull, 2008; Mujahid, 2021). Thus, pesantren function not only as educational institutions but also as cultural fields that shape the Nahdliyin religious habitus contextually and sustainably within the Nusantara Islamic tradition.

Table 2. Stages in the Formation of Nahdliyin Religious Habitus in Salafi Pesantren

Stage	Description of Activity	Internalised Values	Impact on Santri
Collective Religious Tradition	Activities such as *tahlilan*, *Maulid Barzanji*, and monthly *ziyarah kubur*	Communal spirituality, collective awareness	Sense of belonging to tradition and pesantren
Integration into Daily Life	Routine sessions of *kitab kuning*, *yasinan*, and *ratiban* in daily curriculum	Spiritual discipline, affinity to Sufi teachings	Daily habituation of worship and manners
Interpretation by Kiai	Teachings that stress these traditions as spiritual acts, not mere formal obligations	Deep understanding of tradition's meaning	Religion perceived as an inner, lived experience
Emotional and Social Moments	Rituals during *haul*, santri deaths, and Islamic festivals build communal emotion	Empathy, reverence, compassion	Strengthened communal bonds
Internalisation of Ethics	Traditions as media for learning *adab*, love for the Prophet, and social courtesy	Manners, tolerance, social concern	Formation of a moderate religious habitus

The formation of religious habitus in Salafi pesantren does not merely occur through cognitive learning of the kitab kuning, but through santri's lived experience imbued with meaningful repetition of religious traditions. Routine activities such as tahlilan, yasinan, ziyarah kubur, and Maulid Barzanji recitations are not only ritualistic worship practices; they have become integral parts of a collective culture that cultivates spiritual awareness and moral discipline over time.

Rituals performed daily or weekly create spiritual regularity that links religious values with everyday actions. As emphasised by Lang et al. (2022) and Karl & Fischer (2018), repetition in ritual has a regulatory effect on emotion and behaviour, reducing anxiety and enhancing self-control. In pesantren contexts, rituals also nurture social empathy and collective cohesion, as shown by Kišjuhas (2024), who argue that emotional interactions during ritual strengthen moral solidarity in communities. These field findings also resonate with the Islamic habitus framework proposed by Naaman (2017a) and Asror (2017), in which religious habitus is shaped not merely by doctrinal knowledge but through repeated practices within religious social spaces. Pesantren thus function as value-forming spaces where text, affect, and community are woven into an educational ecosystem that shapes santri's religious dispositions in an embodied and sustainable way.

Based on the collected data, four key patterns emerge in the process of religious habitus formation in Salafi pesantren. First, the collective repetition of religious traditions serves as a medium for the internalisation of spiritual and social values. Activities such as tahlilan, Maulid Barzanji, and ziyarah kubur, practised regularly and collectively, shape a pattern of communal spiritual consciousness deeply embedded in santri life. These values are not simply taught verbally but are emotionally and collectively internalised (Karl and Fischer 2018; Kišjuhas 2024). Second, pesantren traditions emphasise the dimensions of adab and religious affection through everyday practice. Santri are taught to show deference to kiai, maintain respectful communication, and develop love for the Prophet Muhammad-not solely through formal lessons but via symbolic repetition.

Third, participatory spirituality emerges during emotional and social moments. Events such as haul, the passing of santri, or major Islamic holidays unite the pesantren community in prayer and remembrance rituals, strengthening solidarity and nurturing empathy. Fourth, there is integration between classical Islamic text education and real-life ethical application. Santri are not only taught fiqh and tauhid, but also Sufi teachings and social

ethics, which are practised through habits of careful speech, honesty, and mutual care. These patterns demonstrate that the formation of Nahdliyin religious habitus operates not solely through cognitive processes, but through embodied, affective experiences rooted in moderate local Islamic traditions.

These findings suggest that Nahdliyin religious habitus is formed not only through formal instruction but through the repetitive integration of religious traditions into the daily lives of santri. Activities such as tahlilan, Maulid Barzanji, ziyarah kubur, and kitab kuning studies function not just as rituals, but as mechanisms for cultivating religious feeling, ethics, and social solidarity. This formation of religious character does not occur merely through doctrine, but through consistent collective and affective experience.

Within the religious habitus framework (Asror 2017; Naaman 2017a), pesantren serve as spaces where texts, symbols, and social practices converge to form inner religious dispositions. Repeated ritual experiences help regulate emotions, enhance respect, and develop santri's social concern (Kišjuhas 2024; Lang, Krátký, and Xygalatas 2022). Thus, pesantren act as cultural agents in sustaining a tolerant and contextual expression of Nusantara Islam while simultaneously resisting the encroachment of scripturalist and purification-based ideologies.

3. Pesantren's Resistance to Purification Trends in the Digital Era

Observations and interviews conducted at several Salafi pesantren in Purwakarta, Bekasi, and Bandung reveal the emergence of adaptive resistance towards the currents of digital da'wa, which are perceived as promoting religious purification and undermining traditional sources of religious authority. This phenomenon reflects the contemporary dynamics of religious authority in the digital age, where traditional institutions such as pesantren must contend with "digital preachers" who adopt populist and rhetorical styles, often lacking epistemological depth (Hefner 2022; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020).

For example, in a pesantren in Purwakarta, several kiai expressed concerns about a "migration of authority," where some students prefer watching YouTube sermons over attending live sessions with their teachers. In response, the pesantren introduced media training for da'wa rooted in classical texts, established official social media accounts managed by senior teachers, and reinforced the importance of *sanad* (transmission chains) and ethics in the transmission of knowledge. One kiai stated, "If students learn religion only from YouTube, they lose the soul and *sanad*. Tradition is not just an activity, it is a path for cultivating *adab* and character" (Interview with Kiai F., 2025).

Meanwhile, Salafi pesantren in Bekasi face the widespread circulation of literalist scriptural content on social media, often lacking context or a valid *sanad*. As a countermeasure, pesantren encourage senior students to create digital content grounded in classical texts, scholarly history, and ethical principles of preaching. A senior *ustaz* remarked, "We teach our students to use TikTok for da'wa, but the content remains rooted in the *kitab kuning*, and always with *sanad*" (Interview with Ustaz, 2025).

In Bandung, resistance to populist media-based da'wa takes a more integrative approach: several pesantren have incorporated creative media training and digital literacy into their da'wa curriculum. This strategy is not a rejection of technology, but rather a means of preserving traditional authority while adapting to the realities of digital communication.

These findings reinforce the argument that pesantren do not resist digital religious purification by isolation or outright rejection of new media, but through adaptive and contextual strategies. Pesantren thus play a dual role- as guardians of scholarly *sanad* and as digital actors guided by traditional values. The strategy seeks not only to preserve the epistemic authority of pesantren but also to respond to contemporary challenges with relevance and moderation.

Moreover, this phenomenon illustrates the contested nature of religious authority in the digital age, in which traditional institutions must compete with emerging figures whose legitimacy stems from social media popularity. These "digital preachers," often favouring populist and rhetorical approaches, shape public religious discourse without grounded scholarly *sanad* (Hefner 2022; Slama 2017). In this context, pesantren face both the threat of doctrinal purification and an epistemological crisis that requires them to reposition their role in the national digital da'wa landscape.

Table 3. Salafi Pesantren's Responses to Digital Da'wa and Purification Challenges

Pesantren	**Digital Da'wa Challenge**	**Pesantren Response**	**Epistemic Basis**
Salafi Pesantren in Purwakarta	Students prefer YouTube sermons over live sessions with teachers	Media training based on *kitab kuning*, official social media accounts	Reinforcement of *sanad* and ethics
Salafi Pesantren in Bekasi	Abundance of literalist content lacking classical *sanad* or context	Senior students produce digital content highlighting *sanad*, ethics, and scholars	Contextualised preaching with tradition

Salafi Pesantren in Bandung	Low media literacy, dominance of populist narratives by digital preachers	Integration of digital literacy and creative media in the da'wa curriculum	Media adaptation to uphold authority

In short, field observations indicate that Salafi pesantren in Purwakarta, Bekasi, and Bandung are addressing the challenges of digital da'wa not through confrontation, but through strategic, tradition-based responses. As summarised in Table 3, these include media training based on *kitab kuning*, production of *sanad*-driven digital content, and integration of digital literacy into religious curricula. These efforts show that pesantren do not reject technology; rather, they seek to adapt it to their traditional values as a form of resistance against the scripturalist purification trends that threaten the legitimacy of religious authority rooted in *sanad*.

The phenomenon of "digital preachers" popularising religious narratives through populist and rhetorical methods-often lacking robust epistemological foundations-has prompted pesantren to assume new roles as both guardians of *sanad* and participants in the national digital da'wa sphere (Hefner 2022; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020). In doing so, pesantren are not merely preserving their authority, but actively repositioning their epistemological identity amidst the shifting dynamics of religious authority in the digital age.

Field data reveals several consistent patterns in pesantren's responses to religious purification in the digital era. First, there is a trend of technology adaptation grounded in tradition. Rather than rejecting digital media, pesantren utilise it to expand their outreach while preserving core epistemic values such as *sanad*, teaching ethics, and *kitab kuning* traditions. This is evident in their media training programmes and official social media accounts managed by senior scholars. Second, there is a counter-narrative to the prevalence of literalist content. In Bekasi, pesantren encourage senior students to produce digital da'wa materials that emphasise *sanad*, ulama history, and *adab* to counter the influx of context-deprived religious populism. Third, there is an active repositioning of religious authority. Recognising the rise of "digital preachers" who gain public legitimacy from popularity rather than depth of knowledge, pesantren are enhancing internal capacities to maintain their epistemological authority in the digital public sphere. Fourth, some pesantren have begun incorporating digital literacy and creative media into da'wa training. This is not merely an innovation, but a long-term strategy to address contemporary challenges while remaining rooted in tradition.

These patterns show that pesantren's resistance to purification trends is adaptive and reflective rather than reactive. The primary aim is to maintain the continuity of traditional Islamic knowledge and authority amid ongoing change.

These findings demonstrate that Salafi pesantren are not merely bastions of tradition but are also dynamic actors in responding to the disruptions of digital da'wa and the infiltration of purist narratives. Through adaptive strategies-such as media training grounded in classical texts, the production of *sanad*-based content, and the incorporation of digital literacy into curricula-they reaffirm an epistemic authority that cannot be substituted by popularity alone. As Rosowulan et al. (2025) note, pesantren are confronting an identity crisis spurred by the influx of rhetorical and instant content from digital preachers who often lack epistemic legitimacy. In this context, pesantren play a vital role in counterbalancing the digitalisation of da'wa, which tends to favour scripturalist and populist approaches (Qodim, Wasik, and Rohman 2022; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020).

Moreover, this supports Hefner's (2022) argument that there is a shift in religious authority from institutions to media figures, which has led to contested terrains in Islamic knowledge production. However, the creative resistance enacted by pesantren-as illustrated in Table 3-demonstrates that these traditional institutions are not only surviving but reshaping the digital da'wa space by prioritising *sanad*, *adab*, and contextualised knowledge. This strategy is not a rejection of digital media, but a form of media resistance rooted in pesantren values (Syvertsen 2017; Woodstock 2014).

The academic implication is that studies of Islamic digitalisation in Indonesia must expand their focus beyond digital preachers to include traditional institutional strategies in constructing *counter-publics* rooted in *sanad* and affective pedagogy. In this framework, pesantren emerge as mediating actors that serve a dual role: preserving traditional orthodoxy and transforming digital da'wa in contemporary Indonesia.

4. Discussion: Tradition, Habitus, and the Repositioning of Religious Authority in the Digital Age

This study aims to explore how collective religious traditions practised in Salafi pesantren contribute to the formation of moderate religious conduct within the Nahdliyin community. Through observations and interviews at several pesantren in Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi, it was found that activities such as *tahlilan*, grave visitation (*ziarah kubur*), recitation of *Maulid Barzanji*, classical Islamic study circles (*pengajian kitab kuning*), and other Sufi-oriented practices function not merely as religious rituals, but as

instruments of value socialisation that operate affectively, repetitively, and collectively.

Three key findings emerge from this research. First, traditional religious practices serve as a means of internalising values such as spirituality, *adab* (etiquette), and empathy through meaningful repetition. Second, this internalisation process forms a distinct religious *habitus* among the Nahdliyin through symbolic interaction, emotional bonding, and shared experience within the pesantren's sacred space, resulting in a contextual and tolerant religious disposition. Third, pesantren have demonstrated adaptive responses to contemporary ideological challenges by engaging in digital *da'wa* based on *sanad* (chains of transmission), without compromising their traditional epistemic integrity.

The close interrelationship between traditional practice, the formation of religious *habitus*, and pesantren's resistance to digital purification narratives reflects their role as sites for the embodied production of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* values. Rituals such as *tahlilan* and *ziarah* are preserved not merely as spiritual heritage, but as mechanisms of *emotional education* that cultivate inner disposition through repetition and affective proximity. In the framework of Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, this suggests that moderate religious values are not simply transmitted normatively, but are internalised through consistent and participatory praxis (L and P 2015; Naaman 2017b).

Furthermore, pesantren's response to the populist scripturalism dominating digital *da'wa* platforms reveals a strategic repositioning in the face of shifting religious authority. As viral sermons and digital preachers increasingly occupy public religious discourse without a solid foundation in *sanad* or scholarly *adab* (Slama 2017), pesantren have chosen a transformative path-constructing a digital *da'wa* ecosystem grounded in *kitab kuning* and traditional values. This indicates that pesantren are not anti-technology; rather, they develop a form of media resistance rooted in local epistemologies (Syvertsen 2017; Woodstock 2014).

The scholarly contribution of this research lies in its integration of traditional religious practice and the theory of religious *habitus* to explain the formation of moderate religious character. In addition, the study offers a new dimension to the field of Digital Islam by demonstrating that pesantren are not merely victims of digital media disruption, but are active and reflective agents in shaping value-based *da'wa* contestation. As such, these findings expand existing studies on religious moderation in Indonesia, which tend to be normative and often neglect the internalisation of values at the level of communal praxis.

Socially, the preservation of these traditions functions as a collective mechanism for cultivating empathy, moral discipline, and spirituality rooted in the community. Historically, it continues the legacy of *Islam Nusantara*, which interweaves knowledge, tradition, and communal life. Ideologically, it serves as a form of resistance to the purification currents that neglect affective and local dimensions of religiosity. Taken together, these findings underscore that Salafi pesantren are institutions not only capable of enduring, but also of strategically reconstructing their identity within the contemporary landscape of digital Islam.

Conclusion

This study concludes that traditional religious practices collectively carried out in Salafi pesantren-such as tahlilan, maulid celebrations, grave visitations (ziarah kubur), classical Islamic study sessions (pengajian kitab kuning), and ratiban-play a significant role in shaping a moderate, tolerant religious habitus among the Nahdliyin, one that is deeply rooted in local culture. These traditions are not merely performed as ritual obligations, but function as affective and embodied mechanisms for consistently instilling spiritual values, social ethics, and communal awareness. Within the social environment of the pesantren, these values are transmitted not solely through normative doctrinal teaching, but through repetition, habituation, and deep emotional interaction.

The principal contribution of this study lies in its integration of traditional religious approaches with the theory of religious habitus to explain the formation of santri's religious behaviour within the context of Islam Nusantara. The findings broaden our understanding of how Salafi pesantren not only preserve local Islamic heritage, but also actively reproduce contextual religious values through institutionalised collective practices. Moreover, the study introduces new discourse within Digital Islam scholarship by showing that pesantren are not merely passive objects affected by the disruption of digital da'wa, but are active agents engaged in epistemic resistance rooted in sanad and traditional values. Pesantren take on a strategic role as custodians of scholarly authority amidst the contestation posed by populist but methodologically weak digital ustaz figures.

Nonetheless, this study has several limitations. Firstly, the geographical scope is limited to three areas (Bandung, Purwakarta, and Bekasi), so generalisation to pesantren in other regions should be approached with caution. Secondly, while the qualitative approach enables in-depth exploration of meaning, it does not yet capture broader quantitative or

longitudinal comparisons regarding the transformation of religious habitus. Thirdly, the constraints of time and access during the pandemic may have affected the depth of long-term observation of santri dynamics.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the study area to include pesantren beyond West Java, and to strengthen the use of mixed-method approaches to test the consistency and quantitative variables that support these qualitative findings. Subsequent studies may also explore the effectiveness of kitab kuning-based da'wa media in developing digital counter-publics rooted in tradition. Accordingly, these findings are not only relevant to the development of Islam Nusantara and religious habitus studies, but also to public policy initiatives aimed at promoting religious moderation literacy and managing digital da'wa grounded in local values.

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Rethinking Tawhid and Tolerance: A Theological Study of Fethullah Gülen in the Context of Plural Societies

Muhammad Adress Prawira Negara
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
muhammadadresprawiranegara@gmail.com

Rahmat Hidayatullah
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
rahmat.hidayatullah@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi konsep tauhid dalam pemikiran Fethullah Gülen sebagai fondasi teologis bagi toleransi aktif dalam masyarakat plural. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah meningkatnya intoleransi berbasis agama di berbagai negara, termasuk Indonesia, yang menunjukkan perlunya pendekatan teologi Islam yang inklusif dan transformatif. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka kualitatif dengan analisis tematik terhadap karya-karya utama Gülen serta literatur ilmiah tentang teori twin tolerations dan active tolerance. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa Gülen menafsirkan tauhid secara relasional, yaitu sebagai prinsip etis yang menghubungkan hubungan spiritual kepada Tuhan dengan tanggung jawab sosial kepada sesama manusia. Konsep cinta (mahabbah) dan kebebasan berkeyakinan dalam pemikiran Gülen tidak hanya bernilai spiritual, tetapi juga menjadi dasar praksis sosial melalui pendidikan, dialog antaragama, dan pelayanan lintas budaya dalam Gerakan Hizmet. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemikiran Gülen membentuk kerangka Islamic public theology yang kompatibel dengan demokrasi dan multikulturalisme. Kontribusi orisinal penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi antara kerangka teologis sufistik dan teori toleransi politik modern, serta penyajian model teologi Islam partisipatif yang dapat diterapkan dalam kebijakan sosial dan pendidikan inklusif.

Kata kunci: Tauhid Relasional; Fethullah Gülen; Toleransi Aktif; Teologi Publik Islam; Gerakan Hizmet.

Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct the concept of tawhid in the thought of Fethullah Gülen as a theological foundation for active tolerance in plural societies. The research is motivated by the rising tide of religion-based intolerance across

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various countries, including Indonesia, highlighting the need for an inclusive and transformative Islamic theology. The method employed is qualitative literature research with thematic analysis of Gülen's key works, alongside scholarly literature on the twin tolerations theory and active tolerance. The main findings indicate that Gülen interprets tawhid relationally-that is, as an ethical principle linking spiritual connection with God to social responsibility towards fellow human beings. The concepts of love (mahabbah) and freedom of belief in Gülen's thought are not only of spiritual value but also serve as the foundation for social praxis through education, interfaith dialogue, and cross-cultural service within the Hizmet Movement. The study concludes that Gülen's thought constitutes a framework of Islamic public theology compatible with democracy and multiculturalism. The study's original contribution lies in integrating a Sufi theological framework with modern political theories of tolerance, and in presenting a model of participatory Islamic theology applicable to inclusive social and educational policy.

Keywords: Relational Tawhid; Fethullah Gülen; Active Tolerance; Islamic Public Theology; Hizmet Movement.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the global landscape has witnessed a significant surge in religious intolerance and violence. This phenomenon is not confined to Western countries-marked by the rise of Islamophobia in the aftermath of international conflicts such as the war in Gaza (Khater, Albakjaji, and El Baroudy 2024; Sunar 2017) but has also spread across Southeast Asia. In this region, high religious diversity does not necessarily correlate with social stability. In Indonesia, for instance, the Pew Research score on religious freedom was just 1 out of 4 in 2020, reflecting the considerable social and legal pressures faced by minority groups (Hakim, Qurbani, and Wahid 2023).

Reports by the Setara Institute and research by Yusuf et al. (2020) indicate that religious intolerance in Indonesia has actually increased alongside the rise of exclusive religious claims. According to these findings, participation in intra-faith activities-such as halaqah or closed religious study groups-tends to reduce tolerance towards non-Muslims (Prasetyo and Halimatusa'diyah 2024). In Aceh, for example, violence against minority religious adherents is often legitimised by local religious authorities who reject pluralism (Nasution, Asari, and Al-Rasyid 2024). This indicates that radicalism does not only pose external threats but is also rooted in rigid theological understandings of tawhid and interreligious relations.

At the global level, the Global Trends in Religious Violence report also demonstrates that states restricting religious freedom are more prone to religious violence, including attacks on places of worship, civil conflict, and transnational terrorism (Saiya 2015; Zellman and Malji 2023). Indonesia is

no exception. Although its constitution guarantees religious freedom, the implementation on the ground remains marred by discrimination, particularly against unofficial religions and communities with differing interpretations (Bagir et al. 2020; Fenton 2016).

Academic research on tolerance in Islam has expanded significantly, encompassing theological, sociological, and cross-cultural practical dimensions. Three main strands of previous studies are particularly relevant to this research. First, studies on Islamic theology and principles of tolerance affirm that values such as compassion, justice, and coexistence are deeply rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith. Scholars such as Ushama (2018), Elius et al. (2019), and Alotaibi (2021) highlight tolerance as a theological principle derived from the Prophet Muhammad's practices and the Ahl al-Dhimmah tradition. This view is also supported by hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic verses on pluralism (Galadari 2012; Kadivar 2021; Takdir and Sumbulah 2024). However, most of these studies remain normative and fall short of reconstructing tawhid as a practical axiological foundation in multicultural contexts.

Second, literature on pluralism and Islamic moderation within socio-political frameworks frequently discusses the concept of rahmatan lil alamin and Islamic cosmopolitanism as responses to radicalism (Basid et al. 2024; Campanini 2021; Hasyim and Hasanuddin 2023). These concepts are also reflected in interfaith dialogue initiatives in Southeast Asia (Khan et al. 2020), as well as in Alfred Stepan's theory of twin tolerations (Solomon and Tausch 2020; Veković 2019) and Mohamed Fathi Osman's notion of active tolerance (Adelman, Verkuyten, and Yogeeswaran 2022; Nasih et al. 2024). While rich in interdisciplinary discourse, few studies have systematically integrated these frameworks into the conceptual and methodological structure of Islamic theology.

Third, research on the thought and movement of Fethullah Gülen has extensively explored his contributions to interfaith dialogue, global education, and modern spirituality through the Hizmet Movement (Conway 2014a; Ebaugh 2010; Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022). Studies by Balcı (2014) and Çelik et al. (2015) have shown how values of cosmopolitanism and social service are manifested in practice. However, these works tend to be sociological in nature and do not specifically examine how tawhid-as a core theological principle-is reformulated by Gülen as the ethical foundation of active tolerance within democratic states and pluralistic societies.

This research seeks to reconstruct the concept of tawhid in Fethullah Gülen's thought as a theological foundation for active tolerance in multicultural societies. Specifically, it aims to address scholarly gaps left unaddressed by previous studies through three main contributions. First, it

examines tawhid not merely as a metaphysical doctrine in Islam but as a relational ethical principle that governs the relationship between human beings and fellow creations of God. Second, it integrates Gülen's thought with Alfred Stepan's theory of twin tolerations and Mohamed Fathi Osman's concept of active tolerance to formulate a model of participatory theology applicable to democratic contexts. Third, it proposes a theological approach that is not only normative but also practical-emphasising love, freedom of belief, and peaceful coexistence as comprehensive expressions of faith in plural societies.

This study proceeds from the argument that tawhid, as conceptualised by Fethullah Gülen, is not merely a transcendent theological doctrine, but also a relational ethical framework that fosters active tolerance in diverse societies (Gülen 2004c; Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022). Gülen interprets tawhid as an acknowledgment of God's oneness alongside the recognition of the diversity of His creation, thereby rendering its implications both spiritual and socio-political (Gülen 2011; Saritoprak and Griffith 2005). Building on this view, the research argues that a relational and Sufi-inspired interpretation of tawhid, as developed by Gülen, contributes to the formation of an inclusive, dialogical, and non-violent religious ethic. Furthermore, when contextualised with Stepan's twin tolerations (2000) and Osman's active tolerance (1996), this yields a theological model of tolerance that aligns with democratic systems in pluralistic societies.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design to explore the reconstruction of tawhid theology as the foundation for active tolerance in Gülen's thought. The unit of analysis comprises Gülen's theological ideas as expressed in his writings and his responses to religious pluralism, contextualised within the dynamics of religion–state relations and multicultural society. The qualitative method is chosen to enable deep understanding of meanings and concepts, rather than quantitative measurement. The primary data sources include Gülen's books, essays, and sermons, while secondary data come from peer-reviewed journal articles, including discussions on twin tolerations and active tolerance. Data collection is carried out through systematic documentation and literature searches, and data analysis is conducted thematically, highlighting key categories such as relational tawhid, love (mahabbah), freedom of belief, and interfaith dialogue within a democratic framework.

Results and Discussion

1. Tawhid as a Theological Foundation for Tolerance

The formal object of this subsection is Fethullah Gülen's theological thought on tawhid and its relevance in fostering interreligious tolerance within pluralistic societies. The data were obtained through a critical reading of Gülen's major works, such as Love and Tolerance (2013), Emerald Hills of the Heart (2004a), and Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance (2004c), as well as academic sources that emphasise the connection between the doctrine of divine unity, the value of love (mahabbah), and interfaith social relations.

In his Sufi-oriented interpretation, Gülen explains:

> *"Tawhid means unifying, regarding as one, believing in God's oneness or unity, and sincerely accepting the reality that there is no deity but God."*(Gülen 2004a)

This statement indicates that tawhid in Gülen's thought does not end at the metaphysical level but serves as an ethical–spiritual foundation that reinforces humanism and social responsibility. Gülen further asserts:

> *"To love God is to love His creation. Harming others, degrading other beliefs, or promoting hatred contradicts the very essence of divine unity."* (Gülen 2004a)

Accordingly, tawhid functions as a theological principle that demands active engagement in building dialogue, peace, and interfaith coexistence. This relational interpretation of tawhid is strengthened by Gülen's reading of Surah al-An'ām [6]:108, which forbids insulting the deities of other religions. Gülen presents this verse as Qur'anic evidence underscoring the importance of respecting religious differences in multicultural societies (Jalaluddin 2023). In Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance, he stresses:

> *"We should have such a tolerance that we are able to close our eyes to the faults of others, to have respect for different ideas, and to forgive everything that is forgivable..."* (Gülen 2004c)

This perspective is not only rooted in normative Islamic texts but also supported by contemporary reflections within the discourse of social theology. Said notes:

> *"Gülen's thought demonstrates a dynamic within contemporary theological discourse that emphasises love and morality as the basis for social relations in multicultural societies."* (Said 2015)

Table 1. Comparison of Tawhid: Classical Theology vs Fethullah Gülen

Aspect	Classical Theology	Fethullah Gülen
Definition	Theoretical dogma of divine oneness	Unity of faith and love for fellow beings
Vertical Relationship	Servant's relationship with God	Spiritual foundation and personal piety
Horizontal Relationship	Seldom addressed	Emphasised through love, dialogue, and social ethics
Social Implication	Normative and individual	Ethical, inclusive, and peace-building
Attitude towards 'Others'	Exclusive and defensive	Inclusive, non-violent, and respectful of difference
Key References	Al-Ash'ari, Al-Maturidi	Gülen, *Emerald Hills*, *Toward a Global Civilization*, etc.

In summary, the comparison between tawhid in classical theology and in Gülen's thought illustrates a shift from a doctrinal framework to an ethical-relational approach. Classical theology tends to emphasise dogma and the vertical relationship between humanity and God, whereas Gülen highlights the social and relational horizontal dimension. Tawhid, in this context, goes beyond metaphysical belief and becomes an ethical foundation for active involvement in interfaith peacebuilding.

The key patterns emerging from this analysis reveal that:

1. Gülen integrates both vertical and horizontal dimensions in the concept of tawhid;
2. Tawhid becomes a basis for active social ethics, not passive belief;
3. Love (mahabbah) and compassion (rahmah) serve as the principles connecting faith with social action; and
4. The relational interpretation of tawhid serves as a theological response to exclusivism and intolerance in contemporary society.

These findings suggest that Gülen's interpretation of tawhid offers a new trajectory for constructing an inclusive and socially responsive contemporary Islamic theology. By formulating tawhid as an ethical basis rooted in love, compassion, and respect for difference, Gülen expands the meaning of faith from doctrinal abstraction to humanistic praxis (Said 2015). This approach aligns with global trends in public theology that emphasise the

role of faith in promoting social justice and interreligious harmony (Abu Shamiy 2003; Esack 1977).

In the context of rising intolerance and religious exclusivism across the globe-particularly in Southeast Asia (Al-Qurthubi 2009; Hakim, Qurbani, and Wahid 2023)-Gülen's notion of relational tawhid provides an important alternative. It serves not only as a theological framework for building social cohesion amid diversity but also as a spiritual foundation for rejecting religious violence and fostering interfaith dialogue (Turam 2004; Yavuz 2018).

Thus, Gülen's thought enriches Islamic theological discourse by integrating Sufi values, the ethics of love, and social commitment into the understanding of tawhid. This concept not only broadens theological comprehension of divine oneness but also lays the groundwork for a peaceful, inclusive, and transformative model of Islam in pluralistic societies.

2. Gülen's Theology of Love and Social Ethics

The formal object of this subsection is Fethullah Gülen's thought on love (mahabbah) as a theological foundation and social ethic underpinning peaceful coexistence within pluralistic societies. This study is based on a critical reading of Gülen's major works, such as Emerald Hills of the Heart (2004a), Love and Tolerance (2013), and Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance (2004c), which consistently emphasise love, empathy, and freedom of belief as moral principles and forms of social praxis within the Hizmet movement.

Gülen states:

> *"Love is the most essential element in every being, a potent source that binds individuals to one another and to existence as a whole."* (Gülen 2004c).

This concept positions love not merely as an individual spiritual quality but as an ontological force and social ethic connecting human beings with one another and with the universe. He elaborates:

> *"To love humanity is a requirement of loving God. Without compassion, one cannot be truly religious."* (Gülen 2004c).

This indicates that, within Gülen's thought, love and compassion (rahmah) are tangible expressions of faith and function as bridges between personal piety and social responsibility.

In Gülen's vision, love also serves as the foundation for the Hizmet movement's social activism, especially in the areas of education and interfaith dialogue. Hizmet schools around the world, as Aydin (2013) describes, are positioned as "islands of peace" fostering empathy, tolerance, and cross-cultural openness. Karakas (2008) underscores that Gülen's social ethics are

grounded in universal values, while Conway (2014a) designates love as "the ultimate virtue" within the framework of Islamic public ethics.

The principle of freedom of belief is also central to Gülen's interpretation of Qur'an 2:256 (al-Baqarah), which he renders as:

> *"Faith imposed is no faith at all. Real faith blossoms through freedom, persuasion, and empathy."* (Gülen 2004c).

This view not only rejects religious compulsion but also lays the foundation for empathetic and egalitarian dialogue.

Furthermore, Said (2015) views Gülen's thought as an effort to broaden the horizons of Islamic public theology by integrating love, morality, and diversity. In this context, love is not merely a matter of personal spirituality, but a transformative social principle that directs religious movements towards active roles in fostering social harmony.

To clarify the distinctive features of Gülen's approach, the following table contrasts the concept of love in classical Sufism with that in Gülen's social theology:

Table 2. Comparison of the Concept of Love: Classical Sufism vs. Fethullah Gülen

Aspect	Classical Sufism (al-Ghazālī, Rumi, ʿIrāqī)	Fethullah Gülen
Meaning of Love	Spiritual path to God	Transformative social energy
Spiritual Function	Purification of the soul, *fanā'* in God	Basis of faith and social relations
Social Dimension	Contemplative and personal	Dialogical, practical, and public
Empathy and Forgiveness	Symbols of divine compassion	Ethics of service and tolerance
Attitude towards Diversity	Not central	Inclusive, non-violent
Key References	Ibn ʿArabī, Rumi	Gülen(Gülen 2004a, 2004c), Karakas (2008)

The table reveals that Gülen shifts the concept of love from a mystical, personal realm to a socially operative praxis. This approach expands love into an ethical principle governing interreligious and intercultural social engagement.

From the examined data, four key patterns emerge in Gülen's conceptualisation of love as a foundation of social ethics.

First, love in Gülen's thought is not merely a personal affection or individual spirituality but a universal principle driving social action. It forms the basis for active engagement in society-through education, service, and interfaith dialogue.

Second, Gülen's concept of love is deeply empathetic. He emphasises that true love must manifest in empathy, forgiveness, and respect for difference. This is evident in his narrative of active tolerance and non-coercive religious engagement. Hence, love in Gülen's framework demands active involvement in creating peaceful and open social spaces.

Third, love serves as a bridge between faith and public ethics. In this framework, faith is not measured solely by ritual observance but by one's commitment to noble social values. Love links personal belief with social responsibility in plural societies.

Fourth, Gülen shifts from the contemplative orientation of classical Sufism toward a proactive social praxis. Through an operationalised concept of love, he integrates Sufi teachings into social transformation efforts, making them relevant in contexts of globalisation, multiculturalism, and growing intolerance.

The findings of this subsection show that the concept of love (mahabbah) in Gülen's thought represents a transformation of Sufi spirituality into a transformative social ethic based on empathy, tolerance, and human responsibility. Love is not merely understood as an emotional experience or personal devotion, but as a universal principle that grounds social praxis in education, interfaith dialogue, and cross-cultural service, as embodied in the Hizmet movement (Ebaugh 2010; N. Mohamed 2014). This thought is rooted in the universal values of Sufism yet driven by a cosmopolitan and public vision, as emphasised by Karakas (2008) and Conway (2014a). Gülen's view that "Faith imposed is no faith at all" (Gülen 2004b) reinforces the link between love, freedom of belief, and respect for diversity-making it a foundation for an inclusive Islamic theology responsive to the crisis of intolerance (Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022; Said 2015).

Thus, in Gülen's framework, love functions as a bridge between faith and public ethics, and as a conceptual alternative for the development of Islamic public theology oriented towards social justice and global peace (Aydin 2013; Greg Barton, Weller, and Yilmaz 2013; Yavuz 2003).

3. Tolerance in Practice: The Gülen Movement

The formal object of this subsection is the manifestation of the principle of tolerance in the social practices of the Hizmet Movement inspired by Fethullah Gülen, particularly in the areas of interfaith dialogue, cross-cultural education, and community service. Data were obtained through a critical

examination of Gülen's principal works, such as Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance (2004c) and Love and Tolerance (2013), as well as contemporary academic studies on Hizmet's global expansion and contribution (Aydin 2013; N. Mohamed 2014).

Gülen (2004c) affirms:

> *"We should have such a tolerance that we are able to close our eyes to the faults of others, to have respect for different ideas, and to forgive everything that is forgivable."*

This statement is not merely normative, but forms the core ethos of the Hizmet Movement, which emphasises active tolerance and practice as integral to a living faith. This principle is embodied in character education, humanitarian action, and interfaith dialogue programmes across the globe.

Aydin (2013) notes that Hizmet schools, even in conflict zones such as Nigeria, function as "peace islands"-multicultural educational spaces that cultivate values of love, empathy, and tolerance among students of different religions and ethnicities. These findings are supported by Karakas (2008) and Mohamed (2014), who highlight how the educational philosophy of Hizmet is explicitly designed to nurture global citizens who uphold peace, religious freedom, and intercultural dialogue.

A defining characteristic of the movement is its rejection of violence and ideological coercion. Gülen cited in (Ebaugh 2010) underscores:

> *"No true Muslim can be a terrorist, and no terrorist can be a true Muslim."*

In addition, his interpretation of Qur'an 2:256 ("There is no compulsion in religion") serves as a theological principle that rejects violence in the name of faith and affirms the importance of freedom in belief. This approach is implemented through interfaith dialogue forums that engage religious leaders and international communities (Greg Barton, Weller, and Yilmaz 2013; Ridwan 2022).

Table 3. Implementation of Tolerance Principles in the Gülen Movement

Field of Practice	Example of Implementation	References
Education	Multicultural schools in Nigeria and East Africa	Mohamed (2014); Aydin (2013)
Interfaith Dialogue	Interfaith forums in the United States and Europe	Long et al. (2022); Barton et al. (2013)
Media and Publishing	Peace-oriented, non-confrontational publications in many languages	Ebaugh (2010)
Response to Extremism	Public denunciation of religious violence	Gülen (2011); Ebaugh (2010)

These findings demonstrate that tolerance in the Hizmet Movement is not merely rhetorical but has been institutionalised as a value system realised through transnational social practices. Hizmet-affiliated schools serve as sites of interreligious and intercultural encounter, while interfaith dialogue forums function as effective social bridges that mitigate polarisation. Even in regions with histories of conflict, this approach has fostered harmony and inclusive interaction (Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022; Setiyadi 2013).

From the data analysed, four main patterns emerge in the articulation and practice of tolerance within the Gülen Movement.

First, tolerance is institutionalised through education. Hizmet schools serve not only as platforms for knowledge transmission but also as arenas for character formation grounded in love, empathy, and respect for diversity (Aydin 2013; Y. Mohamed 2014).

Second, interfaith and intercultural dialogue become tangible expressions of the commitment to active tolerance, realised through interreligious forums and multicultural collaborations that build cross-border social networks (Balci 2018; Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022).

Third, the movement explicitly rejects violence and ideological coercion. The principle "there is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256) forms the theological foundation for empathy, forgiveness, and the rejection of extremism (Gülen 2004b; Said 2015).

Fourth, there is an integration of Sufi teachings and social praxis: love (mahabbah) and compassion (rahmah) are not only spiritual experiences but are manifested in public service and global solidarity (Conway 2014a; Karakas 2008).

These findings indicate that the Gülen Movement has succeeded in operationalising the values of tolerance into concrete and transformative social structures. This approach transcends normative boundaries by establishing educational institutions and interfaith dialogue spaces that actively nurture peaceful coexistence amid global diversity. The principles of love, empathy, and freedom of belief are not confined to moral discourse but serve as the framework for social action, extending into education, intercultural interaction, and responses to extremism. By integrating Sufi teachings with public ethics, Hizmet offers a model of Islamic tolerance that is not only compatible with the principles of pluralism but also relevant as a peaceful strategy in confronting contemporary challenges of radicalism and social fragmentation.

4. Discussion: Twin Tolerances and Active Tolerance

This study finds that Fethullah Gülen's thought on tawhid, love, and tolerance forms a coherent framework of social theology that is operational

within plural societies. The concept of relational tawhid serves as an ethical foundation integrating vertical relations with God and horizontal responsibility towards fellow human beings. Love (mahabbah) is positioned as a driving principle of public ethics-spiritual yet also manifest in social praxis through education, service, and interfaith dialogue. The principle of active tolerance, as embodied in the Hizmet Movement, is realised through multicultural educational institutions, interfaith forums, and a rejection of violence and ideological coercion. These three core findings demonstrate a transformation of theological doctrine into a transformative social ethic relevant to democratic and multicultural contexts.

These findings stem from Gülen's grounding in the Sufi tradition, in which faith is understood not only as individual belief but also as active engagement in building peaceful social life (Conway 2014a; Karakas 2008). Gülen interprets tawhid not merely as the doctrine of divine oneness, but as an awareness of the interconnectedness of all creation, which demands love and respect towards others (Gülen 2004a, 2004c). Accordingly, mahabbah and rahmah are concrete expressions of true tawhid. In response to the rise of global extremism, Gülen advocates active tolerance as a contextual expression of faith-not passive or neutral, but constructively building spaces for interreligious engagement (Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022; Said 2015). The implementation of these ideas through the Hizmet Movement shows that the spiritual dimension of Islam can be articulated institutionally and across cultures, as values such as freedom of belief, empathy, and inclusive education are promoted as collective ethics for pluralistic life (Aydin 2013; Ebaugh 2010; Y. Mohamed 2014).

This study reveals both continuity and innovation in the existing literature on tolerance in Islam. Like Ushama (2018) and Alotaibi (2021), who affirm that compassion and justice are embedded in normative Islamic traditions, this research confirms that such values are indeed integral to Gülen's thought. However, what distinguishes Gülen is his reconstruction of tawhid as an ethical foundation for active rather than merely normative or passive tolerance. In this sense, the study enriches the discourse initiated by Kadivar (2021) and Galadari (2012) on pluralism in Qur'anic interpretation by demonstrating its practical expression in the global and multicultural context through the Hizmet Movement.

Moreover, this research moves beyond the sociological approaches that commonly characterise studies of Hizmet (Aydin 2013; Balcı 2014; Ebaugh 2010) by emphasising the theological foundations underpinning the movement. It also addresses a conceptual gap in previous studies that rarely connect the reconstruction of tawhid with Alfred Stepan's theory of twin tolerations (2000) and Mohamed Fathi Osman's concept of active tolerance

(1996). Hence, this study not only explains how the Gülen Movement functions socially but also asserts that the movement is rooted in an ethical, inclusive, and cosmopolitan theological reading.

The interpretation of these findings suggests that Gülen's thought articulates a form of Islamic theology that substantively integrates transcendent spirituality with transformative social action. By understanding tawhid as an ethical relation that bridges human–divine and human–human interactions, Gülen repositions the doctrine of divine unity within the domain of praxis and proposes a model of religious engagement that is responsive to the dynamics of multicultural societies. Within this framework, relational tawhid emerges as a theological alternative to exclusivist models of religiosity that often contribute to social polarisation and religiously motivated violence (Al-Qurthubi 2009; Saiya 2015).

In addition, the study affirms that love (mahabbah), empathy, and freedom of belief are not peripheral values but foundational pillars of Islamic public ethics according to Gülen. His integration of Sufi values with religious inclusivism offers a participatory model of theology that is not only compatible with democratic systems but also relevant in responding to global challenges such as radicalism, intolerance, and social disintegration. In this regard, Gülen's vision expands the field of Islamic public theology, traditionally dominated by normative–legalistic approaches, by offering a transformative ethic grounded in active spirituality (Conway 2014b; Esack 1977).

Reflections on these findings indicate that the theological model developed by Gülen offers a constructive path toward building a tolerant plural society, while also posing several conceptual and practical challenges. On one hand, the concept of relational tawhid and a theology of love offers an inclusive paradigm capable of reducing extremism and strengthening interreligious and intercultural solidarity, as evidenced in the practices of the Hizmet Movement through multicultural education and interfaith dialogue (Aydin 2013; Y. Mohamed 2014). On the other hand, this approach may face resistance from conservative groups who view the reinterpretation of tawhid as a deviation from classical orthodoxy. Moreover, the implementation of these principles in societies with exclusive legal and social frameworks-such as Indonesia and Turkey-requires state policy support and institutional reform to allow Sufi values to be systematically operationalised. Therefore, although Gülen's theology is proactive and cosmopolitan, its success remains contingent on socio-political acceptance and civic spaces that support dialogical and non-coercive expressions of faith (Bagir et al. 2020; Conway 2014a).

Based on these findings, several policy recommendations may be proposed to implement Fethullah Gülen's theological principles within broader social contexts.

First, governments and educational institutions should integrate value-based education grounded in relational tawhid and the ethics of love into national curricula to foster a generation that is tolerant, empathetic, and non-violent.

Second, ministries of religion and interfaith platforms are encouraged to adopt the inclusive dialogue model developed by the Hizmet Movement as a reference in designing effective and sustainable interfaith forums (Greg Barton, Weller, and Yilmaz 2013; Long, Ismail, and Yaakob 2022).

Third, to counter religious extremism, the state should expand public space for religious narratives that emphasise love, compassion (rahmah), and freedom of belief-as emphasised in Gülen's thought (Gülen 2004b). This can be achieved through support for civil society organisations engaged in peace education, religious literacy, and interfaith service.

Finally, international collaboration is needed to promote cosmopolitan Islamic values in global forums as part of cultural diplomacy, demonstrating that Islam can serve as a constructive moral force in facing the challenges of radicalism and global social fragmentation (Esack 1977; Karakas 2008).

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Fethullah Gülen's thought on tawhid, love (mahabbah), and tolerance constitutes a theological framework that is not only normative but also operational within pluralistic and democratic societies. By interpreting tawhid relationally-as a principle integrating vertical devotion to God and horizontal responsibility towards fellow human beings-Gülen offers an inclusive and transformative model of Islamic theology. The concept of love as a public ethic, along with the praxis of active tolerance through education, interfaith dialogue, and social service, as embodied in the Hizmet Movement, illustrates that Islamic spirituality can be institutionalised into social policies and frameworks that support peaceful coexistence.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its reconstruction of tawhid as an ethical foundation for active tolerance in multicultural societies, and in the integration of Gülen's thought with Alfred Stepan's theory of twin tolerations and Mohamed Fathi Osman's notion of active tolerance, within the framework of Islamic public theology. This approach expands Islamic theological discourse beyond doctrinal abstraction toward social praxis, opening new possibilities for the development of a participatory,

cosmopolitan, and responsive form of Islamic public theology-capable of addressing global challenges such as radicalism and religious exclusivism.

Nevertheless, this study is subject to certain limitations. Its focus on literature-based inquiry and qualitative analysis limits the exploration of field-level praxis from a more empirical perspective. It does not evaluate the concrete impact of Gülen's theological model across different national contexts. Future research is therefore encouraged to incorporate ethnographic approaches or cross-national case studies to assess the real-world effectiveness of this model of tolerance across diverse socio-political settings.

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Ritual, Resistance, and Rights: The Balia Healing Practice and Indigenous Policy Challenges in Palu, Indonesia

Sulistya Pratiwi
Universitas Gadjah Mada
sulistyapratiwi1997@mail.ugm.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bentuk marginalisasi struktural dan hak terhadap praktik penyembuhan tradisional Balia yang dijalankan oleh masyarakat adat Kaili di Sulawesi Tengah pascabencana gempa dan likuefaksi tahun 2018. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana kebijakan pemulihan dan relokasi pascabencana berdampak terhadap keberlanjutan warisan budaya takbenda masyarakat adat. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif dan wawancara mendalam di dua lokasi terdampak, yaitu Petobo dan Donggala Kodi. Analisis tematik mengungkap empat temuan utama: (1) hilangnya ruang sakral akibat relokasi menyebabkan desakralisasi praktik ritual; (2) tidak adanya perlindungan hukum eksplisit terhadap hak budaya dalam dokumen resmi seperti Rencana Aksi Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi (BNPB); (3) ketiadaan representasi komunitas adat dalam perumusan kebijakan; dan (4) ketidakpastian hukum yang mendorong pelaksanaan ritual secara tersembunyi. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa hak-hak budaya seringkali terpinggirkan dalam struktur hukum nasional, meskipun telah diakui dalam norma internasional. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi empiris baru dari kawasan Asia Tenggara dalam kajian inclusive disaster governance, serta menekankan urgensi reformulasi kebijakan pemulihan yang lebih peka budaya dan partisipatif. Dengan memetakan hubungan antara penyembuhan tradisional, eksklusi hukum, dan kekerasan struktural, studi ini menyoroti pentingnya reformasi hukum dan desain kebijakan yang mengakui epistemologi spiritual komunitas adat.

Kata kunci: Balia; hak masyarakat adat; warisan budaya; tata kelola bencana; pemulihan pascabencana.

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Abstract

This study explores the structural marginalisation and rights concerning the traditional Balia healing practice as conducted by the indigenous Kaili community in Central Sulawesi following the 2018 earthquake and liquefaction disaster. The primary aim is to understand how post-disaster recovery and relocation policies have impacted the continuity of indigenous intangible cultural heritage. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through participatory observation and in-depth interviews in two affected areas: Petobo and Donggala Kodi. Thematic analysis revealed four key findings: (1) the loss of sacred spaces due to relocation has led to the desacralisation of ritual practices; (2) there is a lack of explicit legal protection for cultural rights in official documents such as the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Action Plan (BNPB); (3) the absence of indigenous community representation in policy formulation; and (4) legal uncertainty has forced the practice of rituals into secrecy. These findings underscore how cultural rights are frequently marginalised within national legal structures, despite being acknowledged by international norms. This study offers new empirical insight from Southeast Asia into the field of inclusive disaster governance and emphasises the urgency of reformulating recovery policies to be more culturally sensitive and participatory. By mapping the interrelations between traditional healing, legal exclusion, and structural violence, this research highlights the need for legal reform and policy design that recognise the spiritual epistemologies of indigenous communities.

Keywords: Balia; indigenous rights; cultural heritage; disaster governance; post-disaster recovery.

Introduction

Indigenous communities in Indonesia currently face serious challenges due to the rapid pace of social, ecological, and political change over the past few decades. Their traditional knowledge encompassing agricultural systems, kinship structures, and healing practices such as the Balia ritual of the Kaili people in Central Sulawesi is increasingly marginalised by industrial expansion, legal-formal pressures, and culturally insensitive development policies (Hadiprayitno 2017; Rumpia 2024). Balia is a traditional healing system that integrates spiritual values, ecological harmony, and communal solidarity.

However, since the 2018 earthquake, tsunami, and liquefaction disaster in Palu, Sigi, and Donggala, the practice of Balia has come under severe pressure both physically, due to community relocation, and symbolically, due to the disruption of cultural and spiritual spaces essential to the ritual (Allokendek and Ellisa 2022; Timbang et al. 2023). Reports from the Central Sulawesi Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) and post-disaster studies indicate that rehabilitation and relocation processes have largely ignored the cultural dimensions of indigenous communities, including the erasure of sacred spaces previously used for Balia ceremonies (Minarno, Sinamo, and Rilansari 2025; Usman et al. 2023). Balia practitioners in Petobo and Donggala Kodi report that since the relocation, rituals can only be conducted in private due to social pressure and the lack of recognition from local authorities (Timbang et al. 2023). Yet, local knowledge such as Balia has proven to contribute significantly to post-disaster community resilience, as evidenced by the integration of similar practices into disaster risk reduction strategies in Mentawai (Karnoto, Purwanto, and Budiaman 2025).

This phenomenon reflects the dominance of technocratic and homogenised policy frameworks, which have yet to fully recognise indigenous communities as equal political and epistemological subjects (Bettinger, Fisher, and Miles 2014; Nerenberg 2019). As such, the marginalisation of Balia represents not only the loss of local cultural heritage but also infringes upon the rights to health, land, cultural identity, and participatory development as guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Côté et al. 2024).

Research on traditional knowledge and indigenous healing practices has expanded rapidly across disciplines, particularly in cultural anthropology, public health studies, and human rights law. Broadly speaking, the existing literature can be categorised into three major themes.

First, studies on the spiritual and social dimensions of traditional healing highlight that such practices are not merely therapeutic but encompass spiritual meaning, ecological interdependence, and social

cohesion. Struthers and Eschiti (2005), Portman and Garrett (2006), and Mark and Lyons (2014) demonstrate that indigenous healing unites body, mind, and spirit through holistic approaches rooted in indigenous worldviews. The medicine wheel model in Canadian Indigenous cultures symbolises the balance between emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual dimensions (Awashish and Beaulé 2025). Mainguy et al. (2013) stress the spiritual transformation involved in indigenous healing, while McKinley (2024) emphasises its role in preserving cultural resilience against colonial legacies. Several scholars advocate collaboration between traditional healers and biomedical practitioners as a foundation for culturally grounded health policies (Hatala 2008; Tremblay and Ellington 2022).

Second, in the field of law and human rights, the protection of traditional knowledge (TK) faces structural obstacles. Modern legal systems, based on individualistic intellectual property rights, often fail to align with the collective and intergenerational character of TK. Hossain and Ballardini (2021) and Okediji (2019) highlight the weak legal protection for indigenous communities against the commodification of local knowledge. Some countries, such as Ecuador and India, have developed sui generis legal systems more suited to collective rights (Alberto and Quishpi 2023; Bath and Prasad 2025). However, principles such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), as enshrined in UNDRIP and the Nagoya Protocol, have not been effectively implemented in Indonesia (Tomlinson 2019; Yakovleva et al. 2023). The lack of formal recognition of Balia in regional policy frameworks reflects a persistent gap between international norms and national law.

Third, integrating local knowledge into modern healthcare systems has become a strategic agenda for community-based health development. Studies such as Marsh et al. (2015), Posern-Zieliński (2022), and Dalal (2014) show that hybrid approaches combining conventional medicine with traditional healing improve service effectiveness and strengthen community trust. Intercultural health models at Makewe Hospital (Chile)

and interface schemes in Guatemala provide successful examples of contextual collaboration (Hitziger et al. 2017; Torri 2012). However, structural challenges remain significant. Subedi (2024) identifies funding disparities and biomedical dominance in health systems across developing countries. The absence of legal frameworks for epistemological justice exacerbates this condition. In Indonesia, medical pluralism and intercultural health lack strong regulatory foundations, resulting in practices like Balia being unrecognised both institutionally and legally.

This research seeks to fill a gap in the literature on the recognition and protection of traditional healing knowledge through a rights-based approach, particularly within the context of regional policy in Indonesia. The focus is on the Balia practices of the Kaili community in Central Sulawesi, which have yet to be formally acknowledged in legal and health service frameworks. Using a qualitative methodology and the theoretical lens of epistemological justice, this study aims to explore the spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions of Balia, and to evaluate the extent to which these practices are accommodated or marginalised in post-disaster policies in Palu. Furthermore, the study investigates the legal and structural barriers hindering the integration of local knowledge, including the absence of FPIC implementation and regulatory support for epistemic justice. It aims to formulate a conceptual model for the protection of traditional knowledge that is participatory, contextual, and applicable to local policy-making.

This study is based on the argument that the marginalisation of Balia is not due to the absence of medical value, but rather to epistemological inequality and the weakness of legal protections that discredit local knowledge. Formal recognition through the framework of epistemological justice, alongside the implementation of FPIC, is expected to strengthen the position of Balia within local health systems, particularly in post-disaster contexts. By examining the relationship between legal protection, cultural integration, and service effectiveness, this research seeks to demonstrate that the inclusion of traditional knowledge can foster a more just, contextual, and community-accepted healthcare system.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate post-disaster governance and the cultural rights of indigenous communities practising Balia healing in Petobo and Donggala Kodi, Central Sulawesi. The unit of analysis consists of local indigenous practitioners and community figures who continue Balia practices following the 2018 earthquake and liquefaction. The methodological approach is intended to deeply explore the socio-cultural dynamics, legal uncertainty, and policy gaps affecting intangible cultural heritage in the context of disaster recovery. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants (healers, traditional elders, and community leaders), participatory observation during community interactions, and document analysis of relevant policy frameworks such as the 2019 BNPB Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Action Plan and reports by the Central Sulawesi Indigenous Forum. Fieldwork was conducted between January and March 2024, using semi-structured interview guides and detailed field notes. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and meanings in the data, allowing the synthesis of empirical findings with theoretical frameworks concerning cultural rights and inclusive recovery governance.

Results and Discussion

1. Balia as a System of Healing Knowledge

During field observations in Petobo and Donggala Kodi, it was noted that Balia practices persist despite being conducted in secrecy. In several residents' homes, ritual preparations could be observed, including offerings such as yellow rice, free-range chicken, betel leaves, and other symbolic items placed at certain locations deemed sacred. At night, the faint sound of traditional instruments (small gongs and drums) could be heard from houses conducting the rituals, signalling the commencement of the spiritual invocation phase. In one procession, a group of elderly women were seen sitting in a circle, reciting customary prayers as part of the Nosunggilama

Pamula stage-an early phase of Balia involving chants and the harmonisation led by a Notepu (ritual leader).

In an in-depth interview, a Balia practitioner (initial AY, Petobo, 2024) explained: *"Balia is not just a ceremony; it's our way of healing the body, mind, and our relationship with nature. Sometimes people come not because they are physically ill, but because their life feels 'heavy'... we help them find inner peace so they can begin to recover."*

Meanwhile, a customary leader residing in Kapiroe village but regularly participating in Balia rituals in Donggala Kodi stated that the practice could only be conducted by a Topoke, a healer who has established a spiritual connection with the Makaombo (guardian spirits). *"A Topoke is not just someone who knows the chants. They must have encountered the Makaombo. Without that, Balia can go wrong."* (Customary Leader, Kapiroe Village, 2024)

These findings reinforce global literature that views traditional community-based healing not merely as biomedical, but as a holistic epistemological system integrating body, mind, spirit, and nature (Lichtenstein, Berger, and Cheng 2017; Struthers and Eschiti 2005). Similar practices have been documented among the Dimasas in India and the Bapedi in South Africa, where spiritual rites, ecological elements, and orally transmitted knowledge converge (Semenya and Potgieter 2014). Even in contexts such as Norway and Bangladesh, traditional healing persists in response to limited access to healthcare services and as an expression of cultural identity (Haque et al. 2018; Langås-Larsen et al. 2018).

Table 1. Ritual Stages of Balia

Ritual Stage	Main Activities	Spiritual Purpose
Nompairomu	Initial preparation and ritual procedures	Establishing spiritual readiness and aligning intentions among the

		healer (Topoke), the patient (Tomadua), family, and ancestors
Mompesule manu	Slaughtering of a chicken by a Sando to determine the continuation of the ritual	Spiritual consultation to seek guidance from ancestral spirits via signs from nature
Nompangende Joa	Offering food to specific places (e.g., under a tree, accompanied by chants)	Symbolic release of negative energy and harmonisation with nature and spirits
Nosore Vayo	Returning to the sacred space after releasing negativity	Reintegrating with the sacred space, bringing spiritual renewal
Nombangu Tava Kayu	Construction of the Tava Kayu	Symbolises the connection between the Kaili people and nature
Nangande ka ada	Communal eating using traditional Kaili dishes (excluding moringa, per ritual taboos)	Reaffirming ties with ancestors and community through a sacred meal
Nosunggilama Pamula	Recitation of chants and prayers by a Notepu	Sacred communication with ancestral spirits for blessings and protection
Sakaya noisi	Filling of the Sakaya (ritual boat)	Preparing the Sakaya to carry away negative energy

Nompopolivo Sakaya	Preparing for the ritual boat's departure with chants and arrangements	Facilitating the symbolic release of afflictions to the cosmos
Noavesaka Sakaya	Releasing the Sakaya into the sea	Letting go of the patient's negative energy
Nosore Vayo	Returning again to the sacred ritual site	Spiritual readiness to receive healing
Nodungganaka Tava Kayu	Returning the Tava Kayu to nature	Honouring balance by returning natural elements to the earth
Niporo ri Vamba	Applying the Tava Kayu to the patient in a cleansing ritual	Channelling healing energy from nature to the body through water and plant elements
Nangande ka ada no kaupuna	Closing communal meal	Expressing gratitude, restoring social bonds, and reaffirming spiritual relationships
Nosunggilama Kaupuna	Collective prayer for the patient, family, participants, and ancestors	Strengthening collective spiritual ties and seeking blessings for all involved

Based on observations and interviews, Balia remains alive within the social fabric of Petobo and Donggala Kodi, albeit conducted discreetly. The symbolic arrangement of offerings in sacred spaces, the traditional music accompanying nocturnal rituals, and the presence of elderly women in

Mompo rituals all point to the deep integration of healing, spirituality, and cultural heritage. Statements by both Balia practitioners and customary leaders indicate that healing involves not only physical and psychological dimensions but also relational harmony with nature and ancestral spirits.

From the empirical findings, four key patterns emerge in Balia as a system of healing knowledge. *First*, Balia is preserved through discreet yet sustained practice, reflecting the community's adaptive strategies in resisting modernisation and stigmatisation. *Second*, symbolic and spiritual elements dominate: offerings, traditional music, and customary prayers function as mediating tools for communication with the Makaombo (guardian spirits), believed to influence life balance. *Third*, the authority of traditional healers (Topoke) is grounded in spiritual legitimacy, where healing ability is not only ritualistic knowledge but must be sanctioned through mystical experience. *Fourth*, healing encompasses physical, psychological, and ecological dimensions, as reflected in the Mompo–Pagampo–Pangura ritual sequence, which integrates body, soul, and nature.

These findings demonstrate that Balia is not merely an alternative medical practice but a local epistemology-an integrative system of spiritual wisdom, ecological relations, and social cohesion. Balia thus plays a vital role in addressing holistic healing needs, particularly in post-disaster areas where health systems and cultural identity are under strain.

Moreover, the Balia practice is revealed not simply as an individual healing mechanism but as an integral part of the community's cultural and social resilience after disaster. The presence of ritual elements, local spirituality, and the role of figures such as Topoke confirm that traditional healing holds dual functions: psychological recovery and the reconstruction of communal identity. This aligns with global studies that stress the importance of holistic recovery approaches that integrate body, spirit, and social environment (Lichtenstein, Berger, and Cheng 2017; Struthers and Eschiti 2005). In Indonesia, similar patterns have been observed in

community-based recovery efforts in Yogyakarta and Nusa Tenggara, where local belief systems and ritual practices underpin social resilience (Manalu, Soesilo, and Seda 2017; McWilliam 2008).

These findings underline the urgent need to recognise traditional knowledge as a critical component of inclusive post-disaster recovery strategies, rooted in local wisdom and cultural continuity**.**

2. Balia and the Imbalance in Post-Disaster Policy

Field observations and interviews conducted in Petobo and Donggala Kodi indicate that, following the 2018 earthquake and liquefaction disaster, government recovery policies have not fully accommodated local knowledge systems such as the *Balia* healing practice. Communities continuing to practise *Balia* lack legal space and institutional support to sustain these traditions. In an interview, a customary leader in Taripa (2023) noted: *"After the earthquake, people were confused... it wasn't just homes that were lost, but also sacred places. But in the relocation programme, there was no consideration for sacred sites or permission for us to hold Balia rituals." (Customary Leader, Petobo, 2024)*

Another interview with a displaced female resident revealed: *"We used to have a place here for ceremonies. But after relocation, we didn't know where to go. If we hold Balia in public, it might be considered against the rules." (Resident, Petobo, 2024)*

An analysis of the official *Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Action Plan for Central Sulawesi* (BNPB, 2019) shows a strong focus on physical infrastructure and conventional healthcare services, with no reference to the existence or support of culturally based healing knowledge. Records from the *Central Sulawesi Customary Forum* (2021) further confirm the lack of substantial indigenous representation in the recovery policy-making process.

This situation reflects what has also been documented in global literature: that indigenous knowledge is frequently excluded from formal post-disaster frameworks, despite its significant potential for fostering community resilience and psychosocial recovery (Mweta and Juma 2020; Polymenopoulou 2018; Quinn, Williamson, and Gibbs 2022).

Table 2. Comparison Between Indigenous Community Needs and Government Policy Elements

Aspect	Needs of Indigenous Communities	Government Policy Response
Ritual Space	Sacred locations for conducting Balia rituals	Not provided in the relocation scheme
Psychosocial Support	Holistic, culturally rooted healing approaches	Standard medical-psychological intervention model
Community Involvement	Inclusion of customary leaders in policy formulation	Minimal; no formal representation

Field findings suggest that the post-disaster recovery policies following the 2018 Central Sulawesi earthquake and liquefaction have not adopted an inclusive approach toward local knowledge systems particularly traditional healing practices such as Balia. Relocated residents experienced not only material loss but also symbolic and spiritual displacement, due to the absence of recognition for sacred spaces in relocation schemes. Interviews reveal that Balia, which requires specific sacred locations and cosmological relationships with territorial spirits, has been obstructed by formal regulations that fail to acknowledge cultural practices as integral to the recovery process.

Table 2 further illustrates the disparity between the needs of indigenous communities and the content of government recovery policy. For example, the need for ritual space as a medium for collective healing is not addressed in the spatial planning of relocation programmes; culturally rooted holistic healing is replaced with standard medical-psychological models; and indigenous community participation in policy design remains symbolic, without substantive engagement. This imbalance demonstrates clear cultural exclusion (Polymenopoulou 2018) and the poor integration of indigenous knowledge in disaster policy frameworks (Bow and Quinnell 2002; Mweta and Juma 2020), which may in turn intensify collective trauma and hinder long-term community resilience.

From observations, interviews, and document analysis, four key patterns emerge in the relationship between Balia and post-disaster recovery policy in Central Sulawesi:

Structural Exclusion of Local Knowledge: Although Balia serves a central role in collective healing among affected communities, it is not formally recognised in the rehabilitation and reconstruction policy documents (BNPB, 2019). This aligns with Maldonado's (2016) findings that disaster policies often overlook cultural diversity and impose homogenised frameworks rooted in modern science.

Spiritual Dislocation of Indigenous Communities: The loss of sacred ritual spaces caused by relocation has disrupted the cosmological dimension of Balia practices. The absence of spatial-cultural considerations in recovery planning has severed the connection between healing and the spiritual landscape. Similar patterns have been reported by Mweta and Juma (2020), who emphasise that post-disaster relocation often displaces not just people but also their ties to spiritual and historical landscapes.

Imbalanced Participation in Policy-Making: Local communities, including customary leaders, were not substantively involved in formulating recovery policies. The lack of representation has led to

inadequate accommodation of the specific needs of indigenous groups. This reflects patterns of exclusion in disaster governance highlighted by Polymenopoulou (2018) and Ngulube et al. (2024), where cultural rights and community-based resilience are frequently ignored in planning processes.

Subtle Resistance Through Hidden Continuation of Balia: Despite lacking legal recognition, the community continues to practise Balia in secrecy, as a form of spiritual healing and cultural affirmation. This persistence demonstrates the adaptability of local knowledge, echoing Quinn et al. (2022), who argue that community-based healing practices often survive even under major disruption such as natural disasters.

These findings suggest that the exclusion of local knowledge from post-disaster policy is not merely a technical oversight, but rather a form of structural inequality in recognising alternative epistemologies. The absence of Balia from formal recovery frameworks illustrates the state's failure to construct culturally sensitive responses. This supports Polymenopoulou's (2018) critique that cultural rights are often neglected within disaster risk management paradigms. Moreover, the marginalisation of indigenous peoples from decision-making processes weakens long-term recovery outcomes, as recovery strategies fail to reflect the values and needs of affected communities (Ngulube, Tatano, and Samaddar 2024). On the other hand, as noted by Quinn et al. (2022), healing from collective post-disaster trauma requires culturally grounded and community-based approaches that have been proven effective in building resilience.

Therefore, integrating traditional knowledge such as Balia into post-disaster recovery policy is not only culturally relevant, but also strategically significant for strengthening the social and emotional resilience of affected communities.

3. Legal Gaps and Indigenous Cultural Rights

Field observations in Petobo and Donggala Kodi reveal the existence of structural and legal gaps in the recognition and protection of the traditional Balia healing practice in the aftermath of the 2018 earthquake and liquefaction disaster. The relocation of residents to newly designated housing areas has severed the indigenous community's connection to their sacred landscape. Ritual spaces that were once integral to the Balia tradition are now absent, forcing the practice to be conducted discreetly.

"We perform Balia in secret-not because we're doing it wrong, but because we're afraid it might be seen as illegal or cause problems in the relocation area." (Balia Practitioner, 2024)

This concern reflects the ambiguous legal status of Balia within the current post-disaster policy structure. The lack of legal and institutional mechanisms to protect and sustain this cultural practice creates uncertainty for the indigenous community. *"Balia is a legacy. But who protects it now? In the village office or in the shelters, we don't know who to talk to if we want to hold a ceremony."* (Customary Leader, Petobo, 2024)

An analysis of the Central Sulawesi Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Action Plan (BNPB, 2019) found no explicit clauses safeguarding the cultural rights of indigenous peoples. Similarly, records from the Central Sulawesi Customary Forum (2021) confirm the absence of indigenous representation in the formulation of recovery policies. These findings indicate a lack of legal protection for local cultural heritage, despite the important role of Balia in community psychosocial recovery.

This aligns with Quinn, Williamson, and Gibbs (2022), who argue that collective healing in post-disaster contexts is inseparable from local belief systems. However, as Polymenopoulou (2018) notes, cultural rights are often absent from national legal frameworks, despite being explicitly recognised in international human rights norms. Zin, Ismail, and Hanifa

(2024) also highlight that the global Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) framework tends to overlook intangible cultural heritage in its policy focus. Pyke and Wilton (2020) emphasise the need for inclusive disaster governance that transcends technocratic paradigms and respects cultural diversity.

Table 3. Discrepancies Between Indigenous Cultural Rights and Post-Disaster Policy Frameworks

Rights-Based Aspect	Field Realities	Policy Support
Right to cultural ritual	Practised in secrecy due to fear of being deemed illegal	Not recognised in BNPB policy documents
Access to sacred space	No allocated ritual sites in resettlement areas	Not included in reconstruction planning
Participation in policymaking	No involvement in policy formulation	No formal indigenous representation

Based on these data, it is evident that the Balia practice faces both structural and cultural pressure due to the absence of legal recognition within the post-disaster recovery framework. Community concerns about conducting open rituals reflect the lack of strong legal guarantees for cultural rights. Beyond the loss of sacred space, the absence of formal channels for voicing cultural needs deepens the community's sense of marginalisation. This is manifested in the covert nature of current Balia performances, carried out without institutional legitimacy.

Four main tendencies can be identified:

1. Desacralisation of space and symbols as a consequence of sacred landscape loss due to relocation.

2. Lack of explicit legal protection, which renders Balia vulnerable and unsupported as a recognised cultural practice.
3. Absence of substantive participation, revealing the weak mainstreaming of indigenous rights within disaster governance.
4. Institutional void, exacerbating legal uncertainty in the continuation of traditional healing rituals.

These findings demonstrate that traditional healing practices such as Balia face not only cultural marginalisation but also structural disconnection due to the absence of legal support. The legal uncertainty experienced by the Kaili indigenous community reflects the state's weak guarantees for cultural rights during emergency and recovery periods. This situation not only endangers the continuity of cultural practices but also undermines the role of Balia as a mechanism for collective trauma recovery.

This section contributes to the literature on inclusive disaster governance by underscoring the urgency of recognising cultural rights within national legal systems. The absence of policy support for Balia illustrates a significant disconnect between international norms protecting intangible cultural heritage (Zin, Ismail, and Hanifa 2024) and national policies that remain technocratic and exclusionary (Pyke and Wilton 2020). In the context of Indonesia, these findings provide a compelling argument for reformulating DRR policies to be more responsive to the collective rights of indigenous peoples and the preservation of local knowledge systems.

5. Discussion: Balia and the Gaps in Post-Disaster Governance

This study finds that the traditional healing practice of *Balia* among the Kaili indigenous community has faced significant structural and cultural pressure in the aftermath of the 2018 Palu earthquake and liquefaction. The key findings indicate that the relocation of residents to new housing areas has directly led to the loss of sacred spaces and the absence of legal recognition for *Balia*. In this context, the ritual has been practised covertly as a form of adaptation and resistance to a technocratic legal and recovery

framework. The lack of indigenous involvement in policy formulation exacerbates the structural exclusion experienced by the community. Despite lacking legal legitimacy, *Balia* continues to be practised as a mechanism of collective recovery. These four core findings highlight a fundamental gap between the cultural needs of local communities and the formal structure of recovery policies, underscoring the urgency of inclusive approaches that integrate cultural rights into post-disaster governance.

This gap stems from the lack of legal recognition of cultural rights within the state structure. Relocation to new sites was not accompanied by recognition of the customary spaces and practices intrinsically tied to particular landscapes. This has resulted in both symbolic and physical desacralisation of *Balia*, now carried out in secrecy due to legal uncertainty and fear of criminalisation (Nainggolan 1978). The absence of legal and institutional channels further entrenches the marginalisation of indigenous communities, who do not know where or to whom to turn when seeking to hold traditional ceremonies.

Indonesia's recovery framework-as reflected in the *Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Action Plan* (BNPB, 2019) and corroborated by the *Central Sulawesi Customary Forum* (2021) remains centralised and technocratic, leaving no room for substantive participation from indigenous communities. Theoretically, these findings support Polymenopoulou's (2018) argument that cultural rights are often excluded from national legal systems, despite being recognised in international norms. Likewise, Quinn, Williamson, and Gibbs (2022) emphasise that the continuity of local belief systems is vital for collective post-disaster healing. When legal frameworks fail to integrate these cultural dimensions, structural exclusion arises, compounding social trauma.

This study offers a novel contribution by presenting a locally grounded case study based on field data from Petobo and Donggala Kodi. Unlike previous research that focuses on cultural rights theory or global

contexts, this research illustrates how intangible cultural heritage such as *Balia* is subjected to structural pressure within Indonesia's recovery policy. It expands the body of knowledge on inclusive disaster governance, particularly in the underrepresented Southeast Asian context (Zin, Ismail, and Hanifa 2024). Moreover, the empirical approach through interviews and direct observation-bridges the gap between theoretical discussions of cultural rights and the technocratic practices dominant in public policy (Pyke and Wilton 2020).

The social implications of these findings are considerable. When the right to sacred space and customary ritual is not acknowledged, indigenous communities are forced to marginalise their own cultural identity in order to conform to a legal structure that is unreceptive to pluralism. Historically, the marginalisation of *Balia* continues a pattern of asymmetrical relations between the state and indigenous peoples, wherein the state fails to recognise indigenous communities as primary actors in public policy. Ideologically, the exclusion of *Balia* from formal policy reflects the dominance of modern developmental epistemologies that neglect local knowledge rooted in spirituality and social cohesion.

The primary contribution of this research is to advocate for the recognition of *Balia* as a community-based resilience mechanism. This practice carries not only symbolic value but also provides a psychosocial healing structure essential for social reconstruction following a disaster. On the other hand, when practised covertly, *Balia* becomes functionally constrained, producing legal ambiguity, the risk of horizontal conflict, and increasing distrust in state institutions. Legal uncertainty weakens not only the legitimacy of *Balia*, but also the effectiveness of government programmes.

Policy recommendations arising from this study include:

1. Revising national policy documents such as the RARR to explicitly guarantee the cultural rights of indigenous communities;

2. Providing ritual spaces within resettlement areas;
3. Strengthening the participation of customary leaders within recovery policy structures;
4. Drafting specific regulations to protect cultural practices in disaster contexts; and
5. Training government officials in cultural sensitivity.

These measures align with the principles of inclusive disaster governance and international norms on cultural rights (Zin, Ismail, and Hanifa 2024), and hold the potential to reduce disparities between the state and indigenous communities in post-disaster governance.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the traditional Balia healing practice among the Kaili indigenous community has been subjected to structural pressures in the aftermath of disaster, primarily due to the absence of legal recognition and the lack of access to sacred spaces within resettlement areas. Four key findings emerge: the desacralisation of ritual space and symbols; legal uncertainty; the exclusion of customary participation in recovery policy; and institutional voids in post-disaster governance. These conditions reflect a form of structural exclusion from indigenous cultural rights and affirm that collective post-disaster healing cannot be separated from local belief systems.

The primary academic contribution of this research lies in presenting empirically grounded, local case study data that enrich the discourse on inclusive disaster governance by highlighting the often-overlooked dimension of intangible cultural heritage within technocratic recovery policy frameworks. The study also broadens the understanding of the need to integrate cultural rights and indigenous community

participation into disaster policy reform in Indonesia, while reinforcing the argument for locally rooted, values-based approaches in public policy.

However, this study is limited in its geographic scope and timeframe, as data collection was restricted to two locations and a single observation period. Moreover, it has not yet addressed broader political and economic dimensions that also influence post-disaster policy. Future research is recommended to expand the geographical coverage, include a wider range of indigenous communities, and explore the interaction between state actors, donor agencies, and civil society in shaping culturally grounded recovery policies.

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Essay

Lakon Wayang; Simbol Islami dalam Jamus Layangkalimahsada

Wahyu Iryana
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung
e-mail: wahyu@radenintan.ac.id

Budaya Sunda merupakan identitas jatidiri berbangsa yang perlu dilestarikan keberadaanya. Tumbuh suburnya budaya Sunda sebagai sebuah identitas untuk mengurai makna hidup dan menemukan jati diri berbangsa sangat diperlukan sebagai bentuk eksistensi suatu negara besar sekaliber Indonesia (D. A. S. Sunarya n.d.). Lantas bagaimana dengan Sunda sebagai sebuah entitas budaya? Penelusuran identitas budaya Sunda tidak lepas dari fragmen-fragmen kesejarahan masa lalunya.

Masyarakat Tatar Sunda meyakini budaya Wayang yang diadopsi dari India dalam kisah Mahabarata dan Ramayana kemudian dipadu-padankan oleh Raden Umar Said atau Sunan Kalijaga menjadi sebuah hiburan, tontonan sekaligus tuntunan. Ya, tuntunan yang membuat manusia berjalan pada arah yang benar tuntunan keimanan yang berdasarkan ajaran Agama yang rahmatan lil alamin, walaupun kita semua tahu bahwa Kisah Mahabarata dan Ramayana merupakan kitab sakral agama Hindu di India. Inilah Hebatnya Sunan Kalijaga dalam akulturasi budaya dengan tidak menghilangkan tatanan positif yang sudah dibangun oleh para pendahulu bangsa. Lalu apa saja lakon yang dibawa Sunan Kalijaga dalam mengisahkan cerita-cerita wayang? Pertanyaan ini bisa dijawab apabila kita menonton sampai tuntas pertunjukan wayang yang ada di Tatar Sunda dengan Ki Dalang yang

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mempunyai citarasa humor dan kaya nalar budaya yang tinggi, termasuk filosofis hidup yang kerap di dialektikakan oleh tokoh-tokoh yang diperankan oleh sang dalang. Lakon gubahan Sunan Kalijaga yang sangat populer adalah Jimat (Jamus) Kalimahsyahda. Sedangkan Dalang H. Asep Sunandar Sunarya dari Jilekong Kabupaten Bandung Provinsi Jawa Barat yang sangat populer di Daerahnya ataupun dalang H. Rusdi di Indramayu dan dalang H. Mansyur dari Cirebon yang populer juga di daerahnya memiliki ciri khas dalam paparan kisan dalam setiap pertunjukan wayang. Masing-masing dalang baik H. Asep Sunandar Sunarya sebagai Dalang Wayang Golek maupun H. Anom Rusdi dan H. Masnyur sebagai dalang Wayang Kulit Pantura memberi lakon carangan pada setiap tampilan pertunjukannya (D. H. Rusdi n.d.).

Lakon Misalnya carangan (Karangan) Dalang H. Asep Sunandar Sunarya misalnya Budak Buncir (Gatotkaca Nyamar), Cepot Sabda Guru, Arjuna Sakama-kama, Cepot Murka, Sukma Dewa Kusuma, Semar Dadi Raja, Bambang Suryaningrat, Cepot Jadi Sakti, Kitab Sastra Jendra. Sedangkan Dalang H. Rusdi terkenal dalam lakon Bagal Buntung Gugat Sikil, Jaka Intip, Gareng Ngadu Jago, Cungkring Dadi Raja, Semar Lungakaji dan sebaginya. Sedangakan lakon carangan H. Masyur Cirebon seperti Surya Mustika Jati, Pandawa Gupah dan sebagainya. Lakon Carangan adalah lakon karangan yang keluar dari kisah Mahabarata dan Ramayana, namun ada benangmerah yang mengambil latar epik dari Negara Astina dan Amarta sebagai penggalan kisah yang ditambahkan tokoh Panakawan Semar sepanakputu sebagai simbol para Walisanga penyebar Islam di Tanah Jawa. Sosok Semar Kudapawana atau Semar Badranaya diyakini masyarakat Sunda dimunculkan oleh Kanjeng Sunan Kalijaga. Sebagai simbol masyarakat jelata yang hidup apa adanya yang oleh Karl Marx disebut kaum Proletar, atau oleh Ali Syariati disebut kaum Mustadafin.

Sosok Semar sejatinya adalah Syangyang Izmaya atau Syangyang Mumet yang sedang Lelaku dia menghinakan diri untuk mengabdi pada keturuanan Begawan Syakri sampai tujuh turunan. Syangyang Izmaya merupakan Putra Mahkota dari Kerajaan Manikamaya yang berada di Kesyangyangan, dia anak dari Syangyang tunggal dan cucu dari Syangyang Wenang yang merupakan tokoh pewayangan yang tidak tertandingi oleh tokoh apapun dalam kisah pewayangan. Dalam Masyarakat Golek Sunda Syangyang Izmaya ketika turun Ampah ke Maryapada dan berganti wujud menjadi Semar mempunyai anak

cucu yang berjumlah delapan orang seperti Cepot atau Bagong (Astrajingga)(Wayang dalam masyarakat Sunda, Jawa Barat figur tokoh Astrajingga disebut dengan Cepot anak dari ki Lurah Semar Kudapawana n.d.), Dawala atau Cungkring (Petruk), Curis, Dawala, Bitarota, Ceblog, Gareng, Bagal Buntung.Tujuan Penulisan ini tentu saja untuk memberi gambaran tafsir budaya dalam kisah pewayangan yang berkembang di wilayah Golek Sunda dengan dipotret dengan paduan karakter sosial budaya masyarakat Pantura. Karena jujur saja generasi penerus yang mencintai wayang Golek di wilayah Golek Sunda sangat minim sekali, walaupun pepeling Sunan Kalijaga bahwa Wayang merupakan tontonan dan tuntunan. Kegelisahan ini juga yang mendorong penulis untuk memotret warisan budaya tinggalan para leluhur yang merujuk pada warisan budaya para Wali khususnya Sunan Kalijaga (D. H. Mansyur n.d.).

Semar, Jamus Kalimahsahda, dan Tafsir Tauhid dalam Wayang Golek Sunda

Makna Wayang dalam Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KKBI) diartikan sebagai bayang-bayang atau boneka tiruan orang yang terbuat dari pahatan Golek atau kayu dan sebagainya yang dapat dimanfaatkan untuk memerankan tokoh dalam pertunjukan drama tradisional (Bali, Jawa, Sunda, dan sebagainya), biasanya dimainkan oleh seseorang yang disebut dalang (S.Heryanto, 1989:13).

Penulis sendiri mengartikan wayang sebagai budaya warisan benda baik terbuat dari Golek atau pun kayu yang dijadikan sebagai tontonan hiburan yang menuntun para penonton ke jalan yang kebenaran. Karena dalam pertunjukan wayang penonton bukan hanya akan disuguhkan alur kisah penokohan saja, melainkan juga amanah pepeling hidup, narasi hiburan nyanyian oleh pesinden, instrumen musik gamelan, hiburan, humor dari kisah yang dibawakan oleh ki dalang dan sebagainya.

Jamus Layangkalimahsahda adalah makna lain dari Syahadat kesaksian dalam Lima Rukun Islam yang pertama, berisi syahadat Tauhid (Kesaksian adanya Allah Tuhan Alam semesta), dan Syahadat Rasul (Kesakasian bahwa Nabi Muhammmad adalah Rasul utusan Allah), dalam lakon pawayangan Sunda hal ini merupakan gubahan lakon ide Sunan Kalijaga dalam berdakwah. Jamus Layangkalimahsahda sebagai pusaka yang dimiliki Prabu

Amarta Puntadewa yang dititipi oleh Semar kepada leluhur Pandawa dari mulai begawan Sakri, Palasara, Abiyasa, Pandu Dewanata sampai ke Yudistira (Puntadewa/ Pangeran Darma Kusuma) (D. H. A. Rusdi n.d.).

Tokoh Semar dalam kisah pewayangan masyarakat Sunda sendiri sangat familier. Khusus dalam pembahasan Lakos Jamus Layang Kalimahsada salah satu pusaka Semar dari Syangyang Wenang, Cerita dalam pertunjukan penulis fokuskan menjadi tiga bagian cinarita kisah dalam pertunujukan wayang pertama penggalan kisah Syangyang Ismaya Turun Ampah, Kisah Keluarnya Syangyang Ismaya dari Khayangan ke Bumi untuk gawe kelaku (membuat kelakuan baik kepada masyarakat agar memperoleh kesempurnaan hidup), kedua konflik Syangyang Ismaya dengan Syangyang Manikmaya atau batara guru, Astina dan Amarta, Bagian ketiga adalah penyelesaian lakon Syangyang Ismaya menyamarkan dirinya menjadi Semar (Mesem-mesem sembari nyamar), segala permasalahan yang terjadi di Maryapada diselesaikan oleh Semar sebagai paku manusia di alam pawayangan (H. Mansyur 2023).

Di Dukuh Pecantilan Karang Tumaritis tempat Semar Kudapawana dan anak cucunya berkumpul. Nampak Semar sedang berkumpul dengan anak cucunya yaitu Cungkring (Petruk), Astajingga (Bagong), Curis, Dawala, Bitarota, Ceblog, Gareng, Bagal Buntung dari informasi awal terdengar bisik-bisik bahwa Bagong Astrajingga akan meninggalkan Karang Tumaritis. Ketika Semar menanyakan kepada Astrajingga Bagong perihal tersebut, ia hanya menjawab dengan candaan "yang penting mah Bapak ngasih ongkos buat makan, bensin dan biaya hidup saja" cletuk Astrajingga. Begitupun Cungkring dan Gareng yang tidak setuju kalau kakak pertamanya berniat pergi merantau ke Jakarta (Negara Amarta) tanpa membawa bekal apapun. Skil kemampuan individu Bagong yang buta huruf karena tidak sekolah, ditambah wawasan yang kurang itu tidak cukup modal sebagai bekal pergi merantau ke kota ditambah lagi orang tuanya yang hidup miskin sebagai pola lelaku Semar yang memilih menjadi kaula. Walaupun kalau diingat ingat semar turun ampah ke bumi dari kesangyangan manikloka dengan membawa pusaka leluhur yang sangat berharga, seperti Jamus Layang Kalimasahda, Cupu Manik Astagina, Cupu Manik Kusuma, Keris Madupare,dan Kendi Pertula. Semuanya sudah dibagi bagikan kepada anak keturunan Begawan

Sakri, termasuk Jamus Layang Kalimasahda yang sekarag dipakai Raja Amarta Prabu Puntadewa Samiaji.

Dalam Pagelaran seasen pertama Dalang Asep Sunandar Sunarya ketika melakonkan kisah Jamus Layangkalimahsahda mengawali dengan setting latar kisah kahyangan. Dalang bertutur setelahnya Sang Hyang Manikmaya dinobatkan menjadi Raja Tribuana di Kahyangan Suralaya, maka Sang Hyang Tunggal dan kedua isterinya yaitu Dewi Darmani dan Dewi Wirandi mokswa menuju swargaloka sunyaruri. Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga untuk sementara waktu ditugaskan mendampingi Sang Hyang Manikmaya, sebelum mereka nantinya turun ke marcapada (D. H. Rusdi n.d.).

Sang Hyang Manikmaya bergelar Sang Hyang Jagatnata atau Sang Hyang Otipati (Batara Guru atau Batara Tengguru). Bersama Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga, ia mulai menata Suralaya, membuat kahyangan-kahyangan baru yang akan diperuntukan bagi persemayaman para dewa yang menjadi keturunannya nanti. Namun walau pun demikian, Sang Hyang Manikmaya mempunyai ganjalan dihatinya, sebab ia telah mendengar bahwa kakak sulungnya yang lain ibu dari Dewi Darmani, yaitu Sang Hyang Rudra / Sang Hyang Dewa Esa / Sang Hyang Rancasan yang menjadi raja di kahyangan Keling (negeri Selong) telah membangun dengan megah kahyangan yang dahulunya telah diwariskan oleh Sang Hyang Tunggal. Bahkan, konon menurut kabar yang ia dengar, Sang Hyang Rudra / Sang Hyang Dewa Esa / Sang Hyang Rancasan mulai dipuja-puja oleh para pengikutnya. Hal ini dianggap Sang Hyang Manikmaya akan merongrong kewibawaannya sebagai Raja Tribuana, maka tersirat dalam benaknya untuk menyingkirkan kekuasaan lain yang menyaingi Suralaya (A. S. Sunarya n.d.).

Sang Hyang Manikmaya berupaya keras mencari cara untuk dapat menyingkirkan Sang Hyang Rancasan. Harus ada alasan, sebab selain Sang Hyang Rancasan adalah kakak sulungnya walau beda ibu, tapi juga Sang Hyang Rancasan memiliki kesaktian yang luar biasa. Tidak mungkin baginya sendiri dapat mengalahkan Sang Hyang Rancasan, maka tidak ada jalan lain kecuali menghasut kedua saudaranya, yaitu Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga. Dihadapan Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga ia menceritakan kegelisahan hatinya, yaitu keberadaan kahyangan Keling yang telah dianggap akan menandingi kahyangan Suralaya. Sang Hyang Manikmaya juga menghasut kedua saudaranya, bahwa Sang Hyang Rancasan

berkeinginan merebut Suralaya dan ingin menjadi raja Tribuana. Selain itu, Hyang Manikmaya bercerita juga tentang sebuah pusaka yang konon dikeramatkan oleh leluhur mereka. Pusaka yang sangat luar biasa, tidak tertandingi oleh pusaka-pusaka lainnya di jagat pramuditya, pusaka Jamuslayang Kalimasada.

Menurut Hyang Manikmaya, Jamuslayang Kalimasada sebenarnya diwariskan secara turun temurun oleh para leluhur mereka, tapi kemudian oleh ayahanda mereka dititipkan kepada putra Hyang Rancasan sebagai puytra yang tersulung sebelum ayahanda mereka melakukan tapa brata dan terdampar di negeri Samudralaya. Menurut Sang Hyang Manikmaya pusaka tersebut bukanlah dianugerahkan atau diwariskan kepada Hyang Rancasan, sifatnya hanya ditipkan untuk sementara waktu (D. S. Sunarya 2023).

Awalnya Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga tidak terpancing oleh pengaduan Sang Hyang Manikmaya, namun karena kecerdikan Sang Hyang Manikmaya dalam menghasut, maka Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Sang Hyang Antaga pada akhirnya berubah pikiran setelah mendengar kisah pusaka Jamuslayang Kalimasada. Mereka lalu sepakat untuk bertandang ke kahyangan Keling (negeri Selong) guna meminta kembali pusaka Kalimasada yang dianggap telah ditipkan ayah mereka kepada kakak sulungnya (Setiawan 2023).

Setibanya di Kahyangan Keling, Sang Hyang Ismaya, Sang Hyang Antaga dan Sang Hyang Manikmaya langsung menghadap kakak sulungnya. Sang Hyang Rudra / Sang Hyang Rancasan yang bergelar Sang Hyang Dewa Esa menyambut baik kedatangan ketiga adiknya itu, mereka lalu terlibat pembicaraan.

Dalam percakapan selanjutnya diantara mereka, Sang Hyang Manikmaya meminta pusaka Jamuslayang Kalimasada dengan alasan untuk disemayamkan di Jonggring Salaka sebagai pusaka kadewatan, karena dirinya telah dinobatkan menjadi raja Tribuana di Suralaya (Sastroamidjojo 1953). Dengan halus Sang Hyang Rancasan menolak, ia menganggap pusaka itu adalah amanat leluhur yang harus ia jaga & dipertanggung jawabkan amanatnya. Sang Hyang Manikmaya menuduh sulungnya telah melawan keputusan ayahanda mereka yang telah menobatkan dirinya sebagai raja Tribuana. Perbincangan berganti dengan perdebatan, dan akhirnya Sang

Hyang Manikmaya menantang Sang Hyang Rancasan untuk mengadu kesaktian. Perang tanding pun tidak terelakan lagi diantara mereka. Bumi gonjang-ganjing, marcapada kembali diguncang oleh nafsu angkara murka putra-putra Sang Hyang Tunggal. Gunung-gunung menggelegar mengeluarkan laharnya, bukit-bukit longsor bermuragan. Perang tanding terjadi antara Hyang Manikmaya dengan Hyang Rancasan. Keduanya saling mengadu kedigjayaan dan saling memamerkan aji-aji kesaktian. Namun dalam perang tanding itu, terlihat Sang Hyang Rancasan lebih unggul dibandingkan Sang Hyang Manikmaya. Beberapa kesaktian dan pusaka-pusaka kadewatan milik Manikmaya tidak mampu menghadapi kesaktian dan kedigjayaan Sang Hyang Rancasan. Saat Sang Hyang Manikmaya bertiwikrama menjadi berhala sewu, Hyang Rancasan tidak kalah hebat, ia bertiwikrama lebih besar dari raksasa jelmaan Hyang Manikmaya. Begitu seterusnya, setiap Manikmaya masuk ke dalam perut bumi, Hyang Rancasan ada dibelakangnya. Setiap Manikmaya berdirgantara di angkasa, Rancasan pun selalu ada di belakangnya. Manikmaya keteteran menghadapi kesaktian Hyang Rancasan, maka Sang Hyang Antaga dan Sang Hyang Ismaya segera terjun ke palagan yuda demi membantu Manikmaya, keduanya langsung menerjang Sang Hyang Rancasan. Mereka menyerang secara serempak dari segala penjuru, ada yang menyerang dari arah depan saling berhadapan, ada yang menyerang dari belakang, dari angkasa dan dari bawah bumi (D. A. S. Sunarya n.d.).

Perang kejayaan diantara mereka menggemparkan marcapada. Terjadi hujan badai, angin prahara, halilintar dan kobaran api yang disebabkan oleh kekuatan-kekuatan gaib mereka hingga menghancurkan kahyangan Keling dan meluluh lantakan bumi Selong. Dan hingga pada akhirnya, Sang Hyang Rancasan palastra ditangan saudara-saudaranya. Tubuhnya terbelah menjadi dua oleh sebab terjadi saling tarik menarik diantara Sang Hyang Ismaya, Sang Hyang Rancasan dan Sang Hyang Antaga. Namun sesaat setelah kematian Sang Hyang Rancasan, di atas angkasa terdengar suara tanpa rupa yang tidak lain adalah ‘ruh’ dari Sang Hyang Rancasan yang tidak menerima perlakuan saudara-saudaranya. Ia mengancam, kelak disuatu hari akan menuntut balas atas perbuatan mereka. Ia akan selalu membayang-bayangi kekuasan Manikmaya dan akan selalu mengikuti langkah Ismaya juga Antaga di marcapada. Ketiganya tertegun mendengar ancaman dari ruh Hyang Rancasan. Kesadaran dan penyesalan selalu berada diakhir kisah setelah

semuanya terjadi, terlebih lagi perbuatan mereka telah mengusik ketenangan Sang Hyang Tunggal di swargaloka sunyaruri. Sang Hyang Tunggal dalam wujud suara tanpa rupa mengutuk perbuatan Manikmaya yang telah menghasut kedua saudaranya hingga membunuh kakak sulung mereka. Kelak Hyang Manikmaya akan menerima karmanya, yaitu kakinya akan menjadi kecil sebelah dan lemah, maka dengan begitu ia akan mendapat julukan sebagai Sang Hyang Lengin. Giginya akan bertaring sebesar buah randu dan dinamakan Sang Hyang Randuana. Tangannya akan bertambah menjadi empat dan akan mendapat nama Syiwa, dan yang terakhir dalam perjalanannya nanti tubuhnya akan terbakar oleh racun ganas sehingga menjadi biru, maka namanya pun bertambah menjadi Sang Hyang Nilakanta (D. A. S. Sunarya n.d.).

Sang Hyang Manikmaya tidak bisa berbuat apa-apa selain hanya pasrah menerima kutukan dari ayandanya, begitu juga dengan Sang Hyang Ismaya dan Antaga. Perihal pusaka yang diperebutkan itu kini telah diambil kembali oleh Sang Hyang Tunggal dan pada saatnya nanti pusaka itu akan diwariskan kepada para kesatria marcapada yang sanggup mengembannya, Jamuslayang Kalimasada dari titis Manon yakni keturunan begawan Sakri sampai Yudistira (Puntadewa). Perjalanan waktu akhirnya mengharuskan Jamus Layangkalimasada diberikan kepada Syangyang Ismaya sedangkan Singgasana Suryalaya diberikan kepada Syangyang Manikmaya (Batara Guru). Syangyang Ismaya kemudian gawe lelaku turun ke muka bumi dan berubah wujud menjadi Semar Kudapawana (A. S. Sunarya n.d.).

Ada catatan penting dalam kisas Wayang Golek Sunda yang beda dengan versi Wayang dari India. Jika dalam perang Bartayuda menurut versi aslinya, penasihat pihak Pandawa hanya Kresna seorang, maka dalam pewayangan, jumlahnya ditambah menjadi dua, dan yang satunya adalah Semar. Sosok Semar dalam kisah Pewayanagan Golek Sunda hanya ditampilkan sebagai pengasuh keturunan Begawan Syakri, terutama para Pandawa yang merupakan tokoh utama kisah Mahabharata. Namun dalam pementasan wayang yang bertemakan Ramayana, para dalang juga biasa menampilkan Semar sebagai pengasuh keluarga Sri Rama ataupun Sugriwa, sedangkan adiknya Syangyang Punggung berubah menjadi Togog sebagai pengasuh kaum raksasa. Dapat dipastikan anak asuh Semar selalu dapat mengalahkan anak asuh Togog. Hal ini sesungguhnya merupakan simbol belaka. Semar

merupakan gambaran perpaduan rakyat kecil sekaligus dewa kahyangan. Jadi, apabila para pemerintah yang disimbolkan sebagai kaum kesatria asuhan Semar mendengarkan suara rakyat kecil yang bagaikan suara Tuhan, maka negara yang dipimpinnya pasti menjadi nagara yang unggul dan sentosa (Sri Mulyana, 1978:7).

Semar adalah putra Sanghyang Tunggal dan Dewi Wiranti. Ia mempunyai dua saudara yaitu Sanghyang Punggung (Togog) dan Sanghyang Manikmaya (Batara Guru). Tiga bersaudara itu berasal dari telur yang bercahaya. Ketika dipuja oleh Sanghyang Tunggal telur itu pecah Golek nya menjadi Togog, putihnya menjadi Semar dan kuningnya menjadi Batara Guru. Pada waktu di Kahyangan Semar bernama Sanghyang Ismaya dan mempunyai istri Sudiragen. Semar bertempat tinggal di Dukuh Petancilan Desa Tumaritis, dengan nama lengkap Semar Badranaya, dan mengangkat anak delapan sebagai simbol Walisanga di tanah Jawa. Namun umumnya kisah pawayangan hanya tiga orang anak semar yang selalu dikisahkan yaitu Gareng, Cungkring dan Bagong (Pujawiyatna, 1975:55).

Semar, Gareng, Cungkring dan Bagong disebut Punakawan, yang mempunyai arti teman yang setia. Punakawan selalu ikut kesatria yang membela kebenaran, dan selalu menjadi penghibur apabila junjunannya sedang sedih. Semar dalam bahasa Golek Sunda disebut Badranaya (Duyeh 2023). Rincian artinya adalah kata Bebadra bermakna membangun sarana dari dasar, sedangkan Naya adalah Nayaka yang mempunyai arti utusan mangrasul yang memeiliki tafsir Mengemban sifat membangun dan melaksanakan perintah Allah demi kesejahteraan manusia. Dalam hal memilih hidup miskin seolah para punakawan sekaliber Semar seakan berujar bahwa miskin itu indah. Itulah sebabnya masyarakat Golek Sunda kerap tuturkan kearifan tinutur kultur kuno bahwa sangu urip dudu emas dudu pari, tetapi guna kaya purun ingkang den antepi nuhoni trah utama. Bekal hidup bukan pada gemerlap harta emas mutu manikam, tetapi pada kekayaan akal, kolbu dan orioentasi istikamah menjadi manusia utama. Apa itu menusia utama? Sunan Gunung Djati menyebutnya manusia yang bisa dititipi tajug lan fakir miskin. Tidak mustahil, suara lirih ini sejenis the eloquency of silence adalah kefasihan dalam kebisuan dinding sejarah kuno Cerbon. Sesuatu yang gelap heneng hening eling yang membuat manusia terperangkap dalam diam. Maklum, ketika diam, akan banyak percakapan

yang bisa didengar. Dalam diam, suara risau akan mengalir hingga jauh. Dalam diam, diam-diam kita menyadari bahwa republik ini adalah republik predator, surga bagi para koruptor. Selalu saja di media televisi tercium bau busuk demokrasi comprachios. Selalu saja ada rezim kekuasaan yang dibangun berdasar kartel-kartel politik yang menjijikan yang di dalamnya ada banyak kekuasaan oligarki bersifat holistic (Iryana 2017).

Jiwa Jaman (Zeitgest) benar-benar memberikan persiapan kepada Semar untuk memenuhi panggilan zamannya, hal tersebut merupakan bukti apa yang telah dilakukan Semar merupakan legitimasi perjuangan rakyat kecil yang ingin mengubah taraf hidupnya menjadi lebih baik. Dalam nalar kaum pinggirin seperti Semar, minimal ada dua arti penting perlunya menjadi jembatan penghubung rakyat dengan pemimpinnya dalam konteks pergumulan dunia pendidikan mutakhir. kenyataan perlu adanya rekonstruksi pendidikan karakter untuk memainkan peran yang urgen dalam mengawal bangsa adalah suatu yang mutlak harus dilakukan. Dalam tontonan wayang ada tuntunan kaitan pemberdayaan civil society yang dapat memperkokoh norma-norma karakter berbangsa dalam menstimulasi dan memberikan nilai positif bagi tumbuh kembangnya ilmu pendidikan yang maju berstandar internasional. Karena sejatinya partisipasi masyarakat arus bawah terhadap pendidikan sangat bergantung pada pengetahuan dan pemahaman akan proses-proses, fungsi, dan peran serta tingkat penghasilan (Sujati, Iryana, and Mustofa 2022).

Harus diperhatikan sosok Semar bukan hanya bertahan sebagai seorang yang hidup berharap belas kasih orang lain, namun Semar juga dari waktu ke waktu berupaya Keras agar hidupnya berubah, tentunya ke arah yang lebih baik. Masyarakat kecil seperti Semar, akan selalu mendambakan kesejahtaraan hidup untuk mencetuskan gagasan-gagasan idiologi yang bebas tanpa tedeng aling-aling. Bahwa dalam gagasan pemikirannya, masyarakat kecil selalu menegaskan semangat kebersamaan, gotong royong dan prinsip kesatuan silih asah, silih asih, silih asuh. Yang dibutuhkan rakyat kecil, seperti Semar bukan tanda jasa bukan pula segenggam emas. Namun, keseriusan pemerintah untuk mewujudkan kedamaian, ketentraman hidup, dan kesejahtraan untuk kejayaan negeri.

Penutup

Kisah Jamus Layang Kalimahsahda yang populer di masyarakat Sunda pada lakon pertunjukan Wayang Golek, memberi tontonan dan tuntunan. Jamus Layang Kalimasyahda berisikan secarik kertas bertuliskan syahdat tauhid (Allah) dan Syahadat Rasul Muhammmad Saw sebagai hubungan Komunikasi Horizontal manusia dengan Tuhannya. Sang Dalang seolah memberikan gambaran kehidupan jiwa jaman (Zietgest) sejarah peralihan masa Hindu-Islam di Indonesia. Bagaimana sosok Semar dan anak cucunya sebagai seorang putra Mahkota di Kerajaan Manikmaya Kesyangyangan lebih memilih keluar dari istana dan menjadi rakyat jelata menjadi jembatan penghubung kuasa arus bawah pada elit penguasa. Walaupun sejatinya kesaktian Syangyang Izmaya (Semar) tidak terkalahkan karena telah sempurna keilmuannya termasuk juga tercukupi sandang, papan, dan pangannya. Semar seolah mengkritik penguasa yang tidak mau melihat rakyatnya yang menahan lapar dan kekurangan sandang papan, meraka kaum mustadafin kaum proletar yang tidak tersantuni secara ekonomi perlu diperjuangkan. Kisah Jamus Kalimahsyahda adalah setting masa transisi peralihan ajaran Hindu Budha ke agama Islam di Nusantara, hal ini juga menjadi pepeling bahwa di era Demokrasi siapapun bisa menjadi pemimpin baik dari kalangan rakyat jelata atau orang kaya.

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PEDOMAN PENULISAN NASKAH
TASHWIRUL AFKAR

A. PERSYARATAN UMUM PENULISAN NASKAH

1. Naskah belum pernah dipublikasikan atau tidak sedang dalam proses pengajuan untuk publikasi ke media lain dan tidak mengandung unsur plagiat dengan dilampiri pernyataan tertulis dari penulis.
2. Naskah ditulis dalam bahasa Indonesia atau bahasa Inggris dengan kerapatan baris 1 spasi, *font Cambria* 12, ukuran kertas B5, *margin* atas 2.2 cm., bawah 2.2 cm., kiri 2.2 cm., dan kanan 2.2 cm.
3. Panjang naskah minimal 4000 kata (sekitar 15 halaman) dan maksimal 8000 kata (sekitar 30 halaman) sudah termasuk gambar, grafik/ tabel (jika ada) dan daftar pustaka yang menyertainya.
4. Naskah harus disertai dengan abstrak dalam bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia.
5. Naskah dikirim melalui online submission Tashwirul Afkar dengan alamat https://tashwirulafkar.net/index.php/afkar/about/submissions (klik daftar/register).
6. Semua naskah yang masuk ke redaksi akan melalui proses *blind review* oleh mitra bebestari setelah review oleh redaksi. Naskah yang dimuat akan disunting kembali oleh redaksi tanpa mengubah substansi isi.

B. STRUKTUR NASKAH ILMIAH

1. Judul

a. Judul hendaknya ringkas, efektif dan informatif, dengan jumlah 14 kata, termasuk kata penghubung.
b. Jenis huruf *Cambria 14,* ditebalkan, dengan jarak baris 1 spasi.

2. Identitas Penulis

a. Artikel disertai dengan identitas penulis yang meliputi: Nama penulis tanpa gelar akademik (*Cambria 12,* ditebalkan), afiliasi kelembagaan penulis, alamat lembaga, dan *e-mail (Cambria 10, spasi 1).*
b. Nama penulis dan urutan penulis (bila lebih dari satu penulis) harus sudah disepakati semua penulis, biasanya berdasarkan besarnya kontribusi dan partisipasi dalam pelaksanaan penelitian dan penulisan laporan, dan semua penulis bertanggung jawab atas isi artikel.

3. Abstrak

a. Abstrak ditulis secara ringkas dan faktual, meliputi tujuan penelitian, metode penelitian, hasil dan simpulan.

b. Abstrak ditulis dalam bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia, panjang abstrak berkisar antara 150 - 250 kata dalam satu paragraf, huruf *(Cambria 10, spasi 1).*

4. Kata Kunci

a. Kata kunci terdiri atas 3 – 5 kata dan/atau kelompok kata.
b. Kata-kata diketik miring (*italic*), antara kata kunci dipisahkan oleh titik koma (;)

5. Pendahuluan

a. **Pendahuluan** jarak 1 spasi dan ditebalkan.
b. Pendahuluan hendaknya mengandung latar belakang masalah; hipotesis (bila ada), tujuan dan metode penelitian; umumnya artikel tidak terlalu ekstensif; pendahuluan mengacu pada beberapa pustaka yang menjadi landasan teori atau alasan penelitian.

6. Hasil dan Pembahasan

a. **Hasil dan Pembahasan**, jarak 1 spasi dan ditebalkan.
b. Sajian dalam hasil dan pembahasan ditulis secara bersistem, hanya hasil data/informasi yang terkait dengan tujuan penelitian; sederhanakan tabel dan menggunakan tabel terbuka, dan gambar peta lebih difokuskan pada objek yang diteliti serta jangan terlalu besar ukuran filenya serta rumit (diupayakan dalam format JPG); tabel dan gambar diberi nomor urut. Contoh penulisan tabel: Tabel 3.
c. Penggunaan subjudul dalam pembahasan sesuai dengan keperluan pembahasan.
d. Teknik pengutipan sumber rujukan menggunakan catatan kaki/*footnote*, menggunakan sistem sitasi *Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition, Cambria 10*, selengkapnya lihat contoh di ketentuan teknis penulisan catatan kaki.

7. Simpulan

a. **Simpulan**, jarak 1 spasi dan ditebalkan.
b. Simpulan hendaknya merupakan jawaban atas pertanyaan penelitian, dan diungkapkan bukan dalam kalimat stastistik.

8. Ucapan Terima Kasih

a. Bila ada **Ucapan Terimakasih**, jarak 1 spasi dan ditebalkan
b. Berisi ucapan terimakasih kepada lembaga pemberi dana, dan atau individu yang telah membantu dalam pelaksanaan penelitian dan penulisan artikel.

9. Daftar Pustaka

a. **Daftar Pustaka**, jarak 1 spasi dan ditebalkan
b. Literatur yang dicantumkan dalam daftar pustaka hanya memuat sumber-sumber yang dirujuk atau dikutip dalam artikel.

c. Sumber rujukan yang dirujuk dalam artikel, hendaknya merujuk dari salah satu atau beberapa artikel jurnal ilmiah.
d. Teknik penulisan daftar pustaka, menggunakan sistem sitasi *Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition font Cambria 12*. Selengkapnya bisa dilihat pada ketentuan teknis penulisan daftar pustaka.

C. KETENTUAN TEKNIS PENULISAN NASKAH

1. Penulisan Pengutipan

a. Pengutipan rujukan dalam pembahasan hendaknya tidak terlalu panjang.
b. Kutipan langsung kurang dari lima baris ditulis di antara tanda kutip lengkap bersatu dalam alinea dan dimiringkan (*italic*).
c. Kutipan langsung lima baris atau lebih ditulis dalam alinea tersendiri tanpa tanda kutip. Posisi penulisan diberi *indent* lurus dengan baris awal alinea.
d. Kutipan tidak langsung yaitu pengutipan sebuah teks yang disarikan dan dituliskan dalam kalimat sendiri, ditulis sebagai bagian dari alinea tanpa tanda kutip/tanda petik.
e. Pengutipan hasil penelitian atau pendapat orang lain, sebaiknya menggunakan kutipan tidak langsung (menggunakan kalimat sendiri, bukan kalimat yang persis sama).
f. Kutipan ayat Alquran dan Hadis dituliskan dengan huruf Arab sesuai teks aslinya, termasuk tanda-tanda bacanya, dengan menggunakan *Traditional Arabic* 16 cetak tebal. Ayat Alquran ditulis lengkap dengan nama dan nomor surah serta nomor ayat, sedangkan Hadis ditulis lengkap sanad dan rawinya serta dilengkapi *footnote* yang berisi: Nama kitab, jilid, bab, nomor hadis dan halaman. Contoh:

Berdasarkan firman Allah Swt. dalam surah Al-Ankabut 29: 67-69:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا آمِنًا وَيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ (67) وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِلْكَافِرِينَ (68) وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (69)

Hal ini sejalan dengan sabda Nabi Muhammad Saw.:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَّ اللهُ عَنْهَا) قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) إِذَا عَصَفَتِ الرِّيْحُ قَالَ: "اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا فِيْهَا وَخَيْرَ ماَ أَرْسَلْتَ بِهِ، وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيْهَا وَشَرِّ مَا أَرْسَلْتَ بِهِ" (رواه مسلم)٠

g. Khusus pengutipan ayat Alquran yang tidak lengkap dalam satu ayat, diberi tanda titik tiga buah sebelum atau sesudahnya. Contoh:

...ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ ٱللَّهِۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ...(الروم : 30 : 30)

h. Anotasi (keterangan pendek) ditulis di antara dua kurung besar [...] langsung setelah ungkapan atau kalimat yang diberi anotasi. Anotasi yang melebihi satu baris ditulis sebagai catatan kaki.
i. Kutipan dari ayat-ayat Alquran tidak diperlukan catatan kaki karena nama dan nomor surah serta nomor ayat telah dituliskan dalam ayat yang dikutip.

2. Penulisan Kutipan Catatan Kaki dan Daftar Pustaka

Teknik penulisan catatan kaki, menggunakan sistem sitasi *Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition font Cambria 10*, ditulis secara berurutan: Nama penulis [tanpa pangkat dan gelar], *Judul buku diketik miring,* cetakan/*edition* [jika ada], jilid/*series* [jika ada] (Tempat/kota penerbit: Nama penerbit, Tahun terbit), nomor halaman.

Buku yang disunting oleh editor diikuti "ed." tanpa kurung setelah penulisan nama. Jika buku ditulis tanpa kota penerbit diketik "t.k."; tanpa penerbit diketik "t.p."; jika tanpa tahun terbit diketik "t.t.". Apabila tahun penerbitan berupa tahun hijriyah diketik "H." setelah penyebutan tahun. Halaman tanpa penulisan simbol halaman, langsung pada penulisan angka. Apabila ingin menyebutkan lagi sumber yang terdahulu harus disebutkan nama penulis dan diikuti dengan nama buku yang dimaksud. Dalam penyebutan ulang ini, **tidak digunakan istilah** tertentu: **ibid.**, **op. cit.**, dan **loc. cit.**.

Sumber rujukan yang berasal dari bahasa Arab, ditulis dalam huruf latin berdasarkan pedoman transliterasi Tashwirul Afkar [*Legal of Congress*] dengan merubah *font* ke *Times New Arabic 10* (lihat pedoman transliterasi Tashwirul Afkar).

Teknik penulisan daftar pustaka, menggunakan sistem sitasi *Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition font Cambria 12*, ditulis secara berurutan: Nama penulis ditulis nama belakangnya lebih dahulu, diikuti nama depan dan nama tengah (atau inisial). *Judul buku (diketik miring)*.

Cetakan/*Edition.* Jilid/*Series* (bila ada). Kota penerbit: Nama penerbit, Tahun penerbitan.
Jika literatur ditulis lebih dari dua orang: Nama penulis pertama ditulis nama belakangnya lebih dahulu, dilanjutkan penulis kedua dan seterusnya dan nama belakang tidak perlu dibalik seperti penulis pertama. Ditulis 1 spasi, berurutan secara alfabetis tanpa nomor. Penulisan daftar pustaka tidak menggunakan et al., sebagai pengganti penulis kedua dan seterusnya.
Sumber rujukan yang berasal dari bahasa Arab, ditulis dalam huruf latin berdasarkan pedoman transliterasi Tashwirul Afkar [*Legal of Congress*] dengan merubah *font* ke *Times New Arabic* 12 (lihat pedoman transliterasi Tashwirul Afkar).

Dibawah ini beberapa contoh catatan kaki dan daftar pustaka untuk berbagai sumber kutipan:

a. Kutipan dari Buku

1) Satu penulis.

[1]Muḥammad ʻĀbid Al-Jābirī, *Naḥnu Wa Al-Turāth: Qirāat Mu'āṣirat Fī Turāthinā Al-Falsafī* (Beirut: Markaz al-Thaqafī al-ʻArabī, 1990), 29.

Al-Jābirī, Muḥammad ʻĀbid. *Naḥnu Wa Al-Turāth: Qirāat Mu'āṣirat Fī Turāthinā Al-Falsafī*. Beirut: Markaz al-Thaqafī al-ʻArabī, 1990.

2) Dua atau tiga penulis/editor [nama tetap dicantumkan].

[2]Atang Abdul Hakim dan Jaih Mubarok, *Metodologi Studi Islam* (Bandung: Rosda Karya, 1999),47-48.

[3]Morris Neiburger, James G. Edinger, and William Bonner, eds., *Understanding Our Atmospheric Environment* (San Francisco, California: W. H. Freeman, 1973), 87.

Hakim, Atang Abd., dan Jaih Mubarok. *Metodologi Studi Islam*. Bandung: Rosda Karya, 1999.

Neiburger, Morris, James G. Edinger, and William Bonner, eds. *Understanding Our Atmospheric Environment*. San Francisco, California: W. H. Freeman, 1973.

3) Empat penulis/editor atau lebih, dalam catatan kaki dicantumkan hanya penulis/editor pertama diikuti *et al.*, dalam daftar pustaka dicantumkan semua penulis/editor.

[4] Philip S.Gorski et al., eds., *The Post-Secular in Quetion: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2012), 135.

Gorski, Philip S., David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey, and Jonathan Van Antwerpen, eds. *The Post-Secular in Quetion: Religion in Contemporary Society*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2012.

4) Jika mengutip sumber yang sudah dikutip sebelumnya (tanpa ibid. dan op.cit.).

[5]Jalāluddīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, Jilid 2 (Beirut: Dārul-Fikr, t.t.),19.

[6]Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, 77.

[7]Muḥammad ibn ʻAlawī Al-Mālikī Al-Ḥasanī, *Zubdah Al-ʻItqān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān* (Jeddah: Dār Al-Shurūq, 1983), 24.

[8]Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, 83.

[9]Al-Ḥasanī, *Zubdah Al-ʻItqān Fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, 28.

Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāluddīn. *Al-Itqān Fī ʻUlūm Al-Qur'ān*. Jilid 2. Beirut: Dārul-Fikr, t.t.

Al-Ḥasanī, Muḥammad ibn ʻAlawī Al-Mālikī. *Zubdah Al-ʻItqān Fī ʻUlūm Al-Qur'ān*. Jeddah: Dār Al-Shurūq, 1983.

5) Jika buku yang dikutip lagi itu lebih dari satu jilid, dan yang digunakan lebih dari satu jilid.

[10]Al-Zarkashi>, *Al-Burha>n Fi>'Ulu>m Al-Qur'a>n*, Jilid 1 (Beirut: Da>r al-Ma'rifah, 1391 H.), 45.

[11]Al-Zarkashi>, *Al-Burha>n Fi>'Ulu>m Al-Qur'a>n*, Jilid 2 (Beirut: Da>r al-Ma'rifah, 1391 H.), 16.

Al-Zarkashi>. *Al-Burha>n Fi>ʻUlu>m Al-Qur'a>n*. Jilid 1. Beirut: Da>r al-Ma'rifah, 1391 H.

———. *Al-Burha>n Fi>ʻUlu>m Al-Qur'a>n*. Jilid 2. Beirut: Da>r al-Ma'rifah, 1391 H.

6) Buku teks terjemahan.

[12] Mark Woodward, *Islam Jawa: Kesalehan Normatif versus Kebatinan*, trans. Hairus Salim "Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism" (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), 88.

Woodward, Mark. *Islam Jawa: Kesalehan Normatif versus Kebatinan*. Translated by Hairus Salim "Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism". Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999.

7) Buku terbitan lembaga/badan/organisasi yang tidak ada nama penulisnya.

[13] Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, *Pendidikan Anti Korupsi Untuk Perguruan Tinggi*, Cetakan I (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Bagian Hukum, 2011), 38.

Indonesia, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik. *Pendidikan Anti Korupsi Untuk Perguruan Tinggi*. Cetakan I. Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Bagian Hukum, 2011.

b. Kutipan dari artikel

1) Artikel Jurnal Ilmiah

Dalam catatan kaki: Nama penulis artikel, "judul artikel ditulis di antara tanda petik rangkap," *Nama jurnal dimiringkan*, Volume, Issue/Nomor (Tahun terbit): Nomor halaman yang dikutip, doi (jika ada).

Dalam daftar pustaka: Nama belakang penulis, Nama depan dan tengah. "Judul artikel."*Nama Jurnal (cetak miring)* Volume, Nomor/Issue (Tahun terbit): Halaman Artikel. Doi (jika ada)

Jurnal yang penulisan titimangsa terbitnya: Volume dan Tahun

[14]Husnul Qodim, "Dinamika Salafisme Di Indonesia: Akar Intelektualitas Dan Orientasi Ideologis Yang Beragam," *Tashwirul Afkar: Jurnal Refleksi Pemikiran Keagamaan & Kebudayaan* 21 (2007), 65.

Jurnal yang penulisan titimangsa terbitnya: Volume, Issue/Nomor dan Tahun

[15] Lyn Parker, Irma Riyani, and Brooke Nolan, "The Stigmatisation of Widows and Divorcees (janda) in Indonesia, and the Possibilities for Agency," Indonesia and The Malay World 44, no. 128 (2016): 30, doi:10.1080/-13639811.2016.1111677.

Parker, Lyn, Irma Riyani, and Brooke Nolan. "The Stigmatisation of Widows and Divorcees (janda) in Indonesia, and the Possibilities for Agency." *Indonesia and The Malay World* 44, no. 128 (2016): 27–46. doi:10.1080/13639811.2016.1111677.

Qodim, Husnul. "Dinamika Salafisme Di Indonesia: Akar Intelektualitas Dan Orientasi Ideologis Yang Beragam." *Tashwirul Afkar: Jurnal Refleksi Pemikiran Keagamaan & Kebudayaan* 21 (2007): 46–74.

2) Artikel dalam bab atau bagian lain dari buku kompilasi/book section dengan editor atau terjemahan.

[16]Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World," in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Miriam Levering (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 31.

[17]Maribeth Erb, "Kebangkitan Adat Di Flores Barat: Budaya, Agama Dan Tanah," dalam*Adat Dalam Politik Indonesia*, ed. Jamie S. Davidson, David Henley, and Sandra Moniaga, trans. Emilius Ola Kleden and Nina Dwisasanti "The Revival of Tradition in Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism" (Jakarta: YOI dan KITL, 2010), 270.

Erb, Maribeth. "Kebangkitan Adat Di Flores Barat: Budaya, Agama Dan Tanah." Dalam*Adat Dalam Politik Indonesia*, edited by Jamie S. Davidson, David Henley, and Sandra Moniaga, translated by Emilius Ola Kleden dan Nina Dwisasanti " The Revival of Tradition in Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism," 269–299. Jakarta: YOI dan KITL, 2010.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. "Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World." In *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, edited by Miriam Levering, 29–57. New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.

3) Artikel dari Ensiklopedi.

[16]Parvis Morewedge, "Theology," ed. John L. Esposito et al., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of The Modern Islamic World*, vol. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 214.

Morewedge, Parvis. "Theology." Edited by John L. Esposito, Shahrough Akhavi, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, James P. Piscatori, Abdulaziz Sachedina, Sharon Siddique, John O. Voll, and Fred R. von der Mehden. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of The Modern Islamic World*. Vol.4. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

4) Artikel dari surat kabar atau majalah.

[18]Usep Romli, "Trend Wisata Alam: Ngitung Lembur, Ngajajah Milang Kori," *Pikiran Rakyat*, Bandung, 5 Januari 2013, 25.

Romli, Usep. "Trend Wisata Alam: Ngitung Lembur, Ngajajah Milang Kori." *Pikiran Rakyat*. Bandung. 5 Januari 2013.

c. Kutipan dari Tesis/Disertasi yang tidak diterbitkan.

[3]Nuryah Asri Sjafirah, "Transformasi Identitas Pelaku Konversi Agama Etnis China" (Disertasi Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung, 2010), 177.

Sjafirah, Nuryah Asri. "Transformasi Identitas Pelaku Konversi Agama Etnis China." Disertasi Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung, 2010.

d. Kutipan prosiding konferensi/seminar/simposium.

[1]Muhammad Yasir Alimi, "When Religion Fails to Nature Character", (Prosiding International Conference Ethics in Development, Semarang, 17-19 Juli 2011), 59.

Alimi, Muhammad Yasir. "When Religion Fails to Nature Character." Prosiding International Conference Ethics in Development, Semarang, 17-19 Juli 2011.

e. Kutipan dari makalah ilmiah yang dipresentasikan dalam seminar atau konferensi.

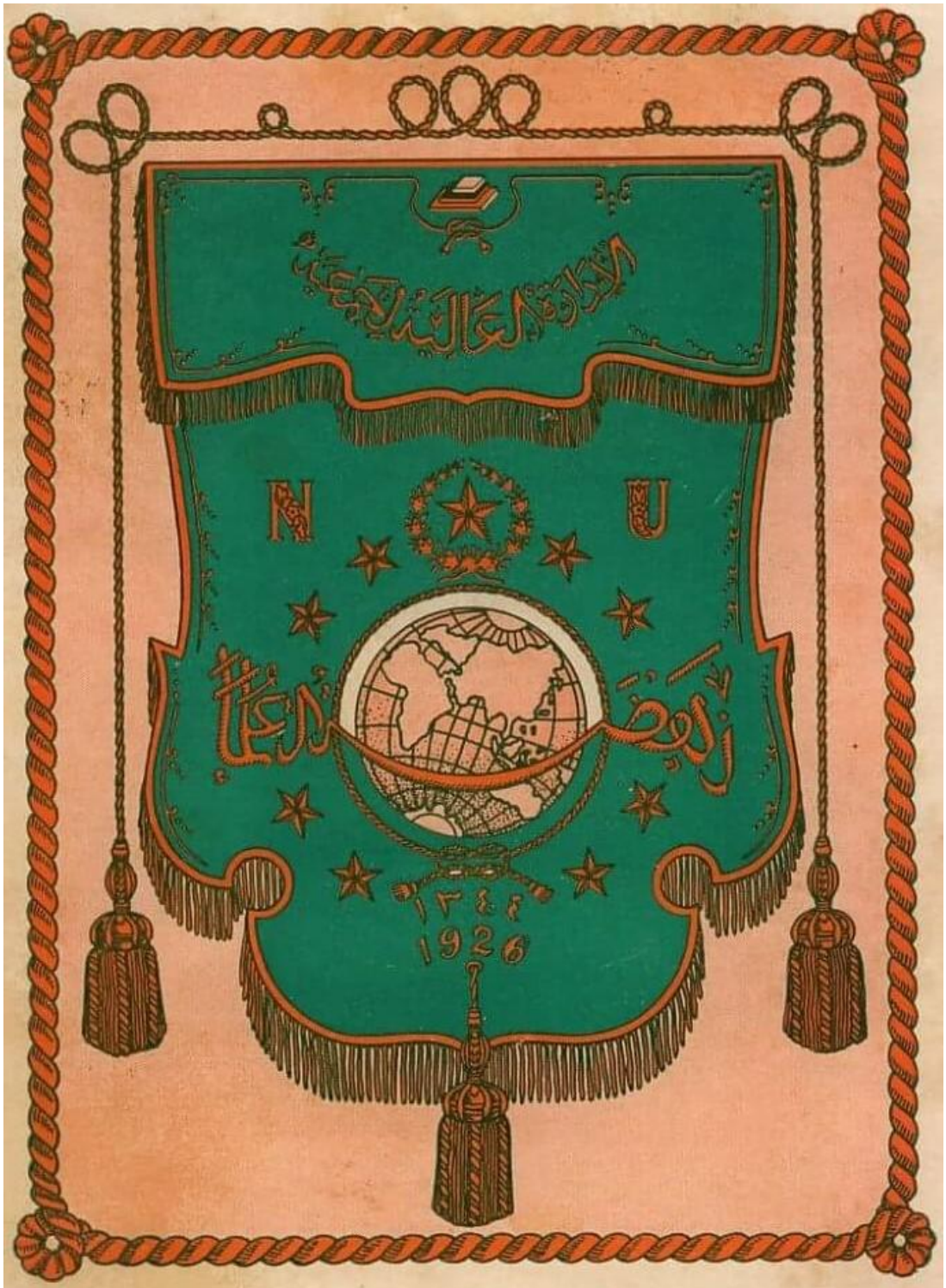
[1]Rachel Adelman, "Such Stuffas as Dreams Are Made On: God's Footstool in the Aramaic Targumim and Midrashic Tradition" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of the Biblical Literature, New Orleans, Lousiana, 21-24 November 2009), 14.

Adelman, Rachel. "Such Stuffas as Dreams Are Made On: God's Footstool in the Aramaic Targumim and Midrashic Tradition." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of the Biblical Literature, New Orleans, Lousiana, 21-24 November2009.

f. Kutipan dari Wawancara

[19] Komar Nuruzzaman (santri), wawancara oleh Busro, Pesantren Buntet Cirebon, tanggal 14 November 2015.

Nuruzzaman, Komar (santri), wawancara oleh Busro. Pesantren Buntet Cirebon. Tanggal 14 November 2015.



Pandji-pandji N.U, tjiptaan asli oleh K.H. Riduan, Bubutan Surabaya th. 1926.

LAKPESDAM

LEMBAGA KAJIAN & PENGEMBANGAN
SUMBER DAYA MANUSIA
Nahdlatul Ulama

Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumberdaya Manusia,
Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama
Jl. KH. Ramli Selatan No. 20A Menteng Dalam, Tebet Jakarta
Telp: (+62) 218298855, Fax: (+62) 218354925,
E-mail: tashwirulafkar9@gmail.com, Web: tashwirulafkar.net
FB: Lakpesdam NU, Twitter: @Lakpesdam

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